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MY OH MY

Photo by J. Alan Paul Photography

On February 25th, 2016, Scott Miller, the voice of Bison football and basketball on KFGO and 740-AM, The Fan, lost his battle with cancer. Miller called Bison games for 20 years.

Back in December 2012, Scott Miller explained to us what working with North Dakota State University meant to him.

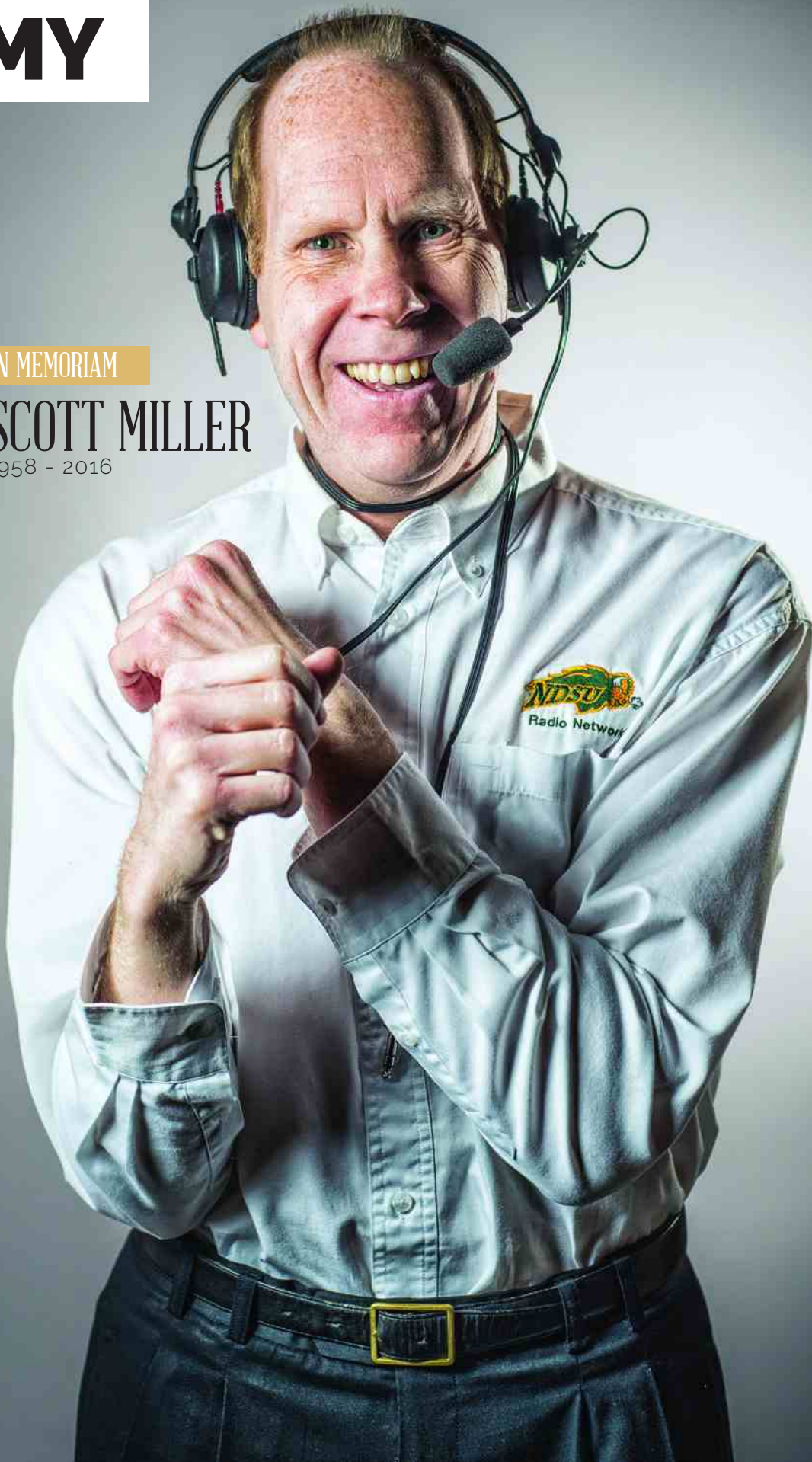
"I really enjoy all the relationships I've developed with all the coaches and the players, first and foremost. From Craig Bohl with the football team and all of his assistants to Saul Phillips the basketball coach and Carolyn DeHoff and Amy Ruley before her – they're great people to work with. It makes it just a pleasure. And the fact that NDSU is a hidden gem when it comes to college athletics and the high-level at which they compete. So to be around a football team that has won a national championship and is competing for another, to be around a basketball team who went to an NCAA Tournament in 2009, and then all the other people that I deal with, not just football or basketball, on a regular basis, it's a real joy."

We'll have more on Miller in the April issue of *Bison Illustrated*. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Miller family and the many lives Miller touched throughout his remarkable and influential career in the radio booth.

IN MEMORIAM

SCOTT MILLER

1958 - 2016



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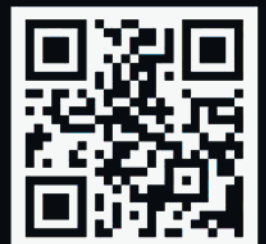


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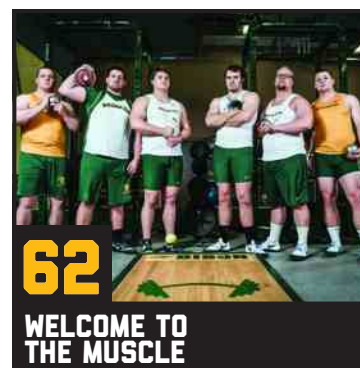
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FEATURE

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BISON ON THE RISE

NDSU is a factory when it comes to developing elite talent at the Division I level. Not only are they making an impact regionally, a handful of these student-athletes are on the cusp of becoming well known on the national scene. Read about seven stars that are about to breakthrough.



WELCOME TO THE MUSCLE

The five best indoor track and field shot putters in NDSU history are on the same team. That stat alone is reason enough to read what they had to say about this rare grouping.



SIGNING THE FUTURE

NDSU football had another promising signing day. We recap the day's events and what it took to get the 2016 signing class to Fargo.



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Neil Wagner is officially an MLB veteran. We catch up with the former Bison who is rehabbing from Tommy John surgery.

WHAT'S INSIDE

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BISON ILLUSTRATED

MARCH 2016 | VOLUME 10 ISSUE 8

Bison Illustrated is a free publication distributed monthly (12 times a year). Our mission is to help promote North Dakota State University Athletics, provide a quality and fun reading experience and to improve the way of life in our community. The publication is mailed to homes across the US and has newsstand distribution throughout North Dakota and Minnesota.

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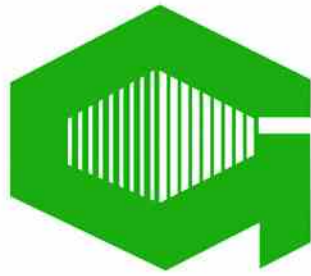


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GIVING THE EXTRA \$1.67

FROM THE EDITOR **JOE KERLIN**



North Dakota State students should welcome the minuscule hike in student activity fees.

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A

t the end of January, Deputy Director of Athletics Todd Phelps and Senior Associate Athletic Director

for Development Jack Maughan spoke to students at NDSU to propose a student fee increase.

The main concern for students through the proposal is an increase from \$4.70 per credit to \$6.37 going to the athletic department. Naturally, the students initially fought back with questions and criticisms before, ultimately, the dust settled once more details were released.

Only graduating less than two years ago, I know many students are still apprehensive about athletics implementing an increase in students' cost per credit going to

athletics. What's wrong with the current model, they ask. Why should I pay for teams to travel when I don't attend any sporting events?

All are fair and honest critiques of NDSU Athletics' budget plan. But, students, what NDSU is asking for is marginal among the landscape of Division I institutions and many of NDSU's peers.

Examine the pros. When is the last time you grabbed cash out of your pocket to attend an NDSU regular season sporting event? The answer is never.

Let's say the average student takes 17 credits per semester. That would calculate to \$108.29 of your tuition going to NDSU Athletics. Divide that number by the six home football games and add how much it costs for students to attend said games – which is zero – and the number comes to around \$18.05

per game. Add a couple volleyball games and one or two soccer games, that are still free for students to attend, and the cost per ticket dips even lower.

Compare these calculations to somebody holding a highly-coveted NDSU football season ticket that costs \$205 and your \$18.05 a game is a drop in the hat.

I'm aware students that attend school sporting events is a niche collection of the student body. So what about the other thousands that are paying the fees and not attending?

The reality is you're going to be spending a lot of money to attend college if you aren't supported by a scholarship or grant of some kind. Student activity fees are a necessity at the mid-major athletic level NDSU competes in.

In 2014, just over five percent of NDSU Athletics' \$20.7 million in

total revenue were from student fees. Meanwhile, that same year at Illinois State, student fees accounted for 42 percent of the athletic department's revenue.

Illinois State isn't an anomaly. Missouri Valley conference foes Southern Illinois, Indiana State and Western Illinois are above 30 percent when it comes to the total amount of revenue coming from student fees.

Students should be excited that NDSU Athletics is implanting a new initiative to improve its program. NDSU is on the brink of becoming the leader among "mid-majors" when it comes to having a financial model to maximize its opportunities. Embrace the \$1.67 increase and be prideful knowing you're doing your part for the school's athletic success.

SINCERELY,
Joe Kerlin

TEAM EFFORT AT SPOTLIGHT

FROM **PAUL BOUGIE**

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H

ow does one say thank you? I could send flowers from Shotwell, buy something cool from SCHEELS, maybe it's a night on the town with my favorite Jack Daniels, or bet-

ter yet, you can just come out and say it - THANK YOU.

That is what I want to take an opportunity to do right here, right now. Last month, we at Spotlight Media published four, you got it, four solid publications: Fargo Monthly, Design & Living, our new baby Fargo Inc!, and the huge five-time National Championship Edition of Bison Illustrated.

We have one of the best teams around. We all work hard to bring you the best we can each and every month. But I have to admit that I have a soft spot for Bison Illustrated, well since I am a big Bison guy, it's a favorite.

I also want to take a moment to give a special shout out to the

crew who has a little more to do with Bison Illustrated. First off, there is **Joe Kerlin**, a graduate of NDSU, and now the Editor of Bison Illustrated. He not only works countless hours on the mag, he is always thinking about how he can showcase our student-athletes in the best light possible. In fact, as I'm writing this he is asking me about the June issue.

Then there is our design team. **Sarah** is the lady that keeps all four mags on track and ready for the printer. **Soda** is creating fun and creative ads for our customers. And lastly, the main designer of Bison Illustrated - **Ryan**. He is the man along with Joe that gives you the look you have come to enjoy month after month in Bison Illustrated.

Bottom line, we have one great team working on Bison Illustrated and all of our publications at Spotlight Media. I would highly suggest you get all four, make a beverage (in a tailgating approved cup from oneherd.com) and enjoy the read.

GO BISON!

Paul Bougie

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BISON SHOTS

By Paul Flessland

"It was a bitterly cold and snowy February afternoon when we returned to the Sanford Health Athletic Complex. It seemed like the coldest day this winter. I had completed my third tour inside the SHAC, which was surprisingly quite warm this time of year, and shot many quality photos of the interior (page 92). That was the easy part. I knew I should get a shot of the exterior, but the weather was so nasty that I almost returned to the warm, cozy office without it. I decided to suck it up and brace the elements. With the sun setting and the sharp wind and snow blowing in my face, I lined up and took this shot. Totally worth it. You'll never regret going the extra mile." As told by *Bison Illustrated* photographer Paul Flessland.

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BISON ON THE RISE

NDSU's tradition of excellence has produced a countless amount of student-athletes who strike fear in the faces of opponents. Littered within opposing schools' game plans are Bison scorers, hitters and runners that can swing the momentum of any competition with their presence alone. Who are these student-athletes? Who are the few that conference foes focus on shutting down? We highlight seven student-athletes that are making a name for themselves and have been labeled, "On the Rise."

*Stories by Joe Kerlin
Featured Photos by J. Alan Paul
Photography and Paul Flessland*



ERIN TESCHUK
SENIOR
TRACK AND FIELD/
CROSS COUNTRY

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PAUL MILLER
SOPHOMORE
BASKETBALL

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CLAY REAM
SOPHOMORE
WRESTLING

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ROSE JACKSON
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TAYLOR THUNSTEDT
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Page 32



NATALIE ROTH
SOPHOMORE
GOLF

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BEN PETERSEN
JUNIOR
BASEBALL

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READ MORE





“If you’re going to do something, it’s worth doing it as best you can. So I think at that point I was like, ‘I want to see how good I can be with this and see if I can compete with the best people in the world.’”



Erin Teschuk





Erin Teschuk at the starting line of the IAAF World Championships in Beijing, China. She clocked a new personal record 9:40.07 in the steeplechase.

READY FOR THE WORLD STAGE

Photos by Athletics Canada, Walt Middleton

Erin Teschuk is doing something special every time she laces up the track spikes. The Winnipeg, Manitoba, native is not only leaving opponents in the dust at the college level, she's one of the brightest up-and-coming athletes in Canada.

Eighteen months ago, Erin Teschuk was just another member of the NDSU distance team that was destined to become a fixture on the cross country and distance medley relay team. She had anchored the DMR team that won the Summit League Indoor Championships title for two consecutive seasons and was becoming recognized nationally in the 3,000-meter steeplechase.

Then, seemingly out of nowhere, the Winnipeg, Manitoba, native became the first Bison cross-country runner to qualify for the NCAA Championships at the Division I level. Teschuk finished 116th out of 255 competitors, but the result has elevated her to heights never before seen from a female student-athlete in NDSU history.

"There was a big change last year, even being coached by Andrew (Carlson) and he has had that experience running professionally as well, and I think he inspired a lot of us to make sure we're at our best," Teschuk said. "If you're going to do something, it's worth doing as best you can. So I think at that point I was like, 'I want to see how good I can be with this and see if I can compete with the best people in the world.'"

Fast forward nine months later and Teschuk found herself doing exactly what she set out to do. She was in Beijing, China, lining up against the fastest steeplechase runners in the world.



After placing fifth at the NCAA Championships during the outdoor season and becoming a first-team All-American, the 20-year-old was ready to compete this past summer in Canada.

She won the Canadian national title in the steeplechase last July and as a member of team Canada at the Pan American Games in Toronto, she finished fourth.

Teschuk made Fargo her home base this summer, training for her first trip overseas to compete in the IAAF World Championships in Beijing. She was under the training of her distance coach Andrew Carlson, a Fargo native who spent several years competing professionally.

"Hats off to Andrew for developing a training plan," said women's track and field coach Stevie Keller. "When you have a student-athlete that continues to improve, you want to continue to

challenge them and you look into the future and make a training plan for maybe the NCAAs, then it's wait a minute, we need to go into the summer, we need to go into August. For him to make those adjustments in training, to challenge her and to continue to see her improve is pretty phenomenal."

From Edmonton to Toronto, with stops in Fargo in between, Teschuk made her way to Jeju City, South Korea, to climatize herself for her first competition in another continent.

She didn't disappoint in China. Teschuk ran the best race of her life and did it with her school, country and world watching. She broke the NDSU school record, running a 9:40.07 steeplechase and finished 25th.

Teschuk is the third fastest steeplechase runner in Canadian history. Her time in Beijing also meets the standard for the 2016 Olympic Games later this summer.

"It was my first time competing with the best people in the world and being on that big of a stage, so it was all very new," Teschuk said. "But, I feel like I was just trying to absorb so much information about it. Just being around people who have done this before and getting used to it, because it's something I want to be doing now for many years to come."

ACCOLADES

2014, 2015 Summit League Cross Country Athlete of the Year

2013, 2014, 2015 Cross Country First Team All-Summit League

2013, 2014 Indoor Distance Medley Relay Summit League Champion

2014, 2015 3,000-meter Steeplechase Summit League Champion

2015 1,500-meter Summit League Champion

2015 NCAA First Team All-American

2015 Summit League Indoor/Outdoor Track Athlete of the Year

2015 USTFCCA Midwest Region Indoor Women's Track Athlete of the Year

2015 Canadian Steeplechase National Champion

NDSU RECORDS

Indoor Mile

4:32.35

Indoor 3,000-Meter

9:02.40

Indoor 5,000-Meter

16:01.69

Indoor Distance Medley Relay

11:10.49

Outdoor 1,500-Meter

4:17.10

Steeplechase

9:40.07

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Now 21 years old and winding down her senior year of track and field, you'd never guess the reserved Teschuk had competed among the greatest in the world. In fact, there's almost an awkward tone when talking about China because it happened six months ago and she's already on to the next challenge.

"It's actually a weird thought to think, 'Oh wow, she was at Worlds this summer,' because she doesn't really talk about it or anything. The only time I've ever gotten stories from Beijing is if I ask about it," Teschuk's teammate and fellow distance runner Taylor Janssen said. "She's very humble. You're not intimidated or anything like that because she's so nice."

Teschuk isn't one to bask in her own glory and said competing at Worlds is no different than competing at the Summit League Championships.

She still hasn't decided whether she'll return to NDSU this fall for her final season of eligibility in cross country, although she plans on meeting her requirements for an undergraduate degree this summer. To go along with her accolade-laden athletic resume, Teschuk is an All-Academic honoree.

In July, Teschuk will compete in Canada for the official selection trials for the Olympic Games. If she finishes

in the top three, she could be on her way to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in August, for the 2016 Summer Games.

"Of course, there's the end goals and stuff that keeps you going, but it's also just a lot of fun. Going to practice every day is my favorite part of the day. Obviously, it's hard some days, but it's still something I look forward to all the time," Teschuk said. "It helps to have your teammates there and everything like that."

After qualifying for the cross country NCAA Championships this November, Teschuk has only competed in a handful of races to begin the indoor track and field season. She currently holds the fourth-fastest mile time in the country and her distance medley relay team is coming off a first place finish in the Armory Track Invitational in New York.

Teschuk said there is one goal she's yet to reach. Before her college career ends, she'd like to win an NCAA title. The mile is an event Teschuk will have a shot at this spring, and this summer, she hopes to improve on her fifth-place finish in the steeplechase.

"I think she's going to have a long career in the professional ranks," Keller said. "Her having the Olympic standard and having an opportunity to potentially compete for her country

at the Olympic games is just going to open doors for her. She's going to have opportunities to train with some of the best running programs in the country after she finishes her career at NDSU."

Much like Amanda Smock, who represented NDSU by making the USA Olympic team in 2012, Teschuk has an opportunity to prove that elite track and field athletes can be produced in northern schools.

"It's really, for distance runners, opened kids' eyes to, 'I can go to NDSU and I can be a distance runner and I can be successful,' Keller explained. "Kids want to go south, they think they need warm weather and things like that, but I think if you get in the right training system, then it doesn't matter where you're at. We have the resources here for any event area to be successful and I think having Andrew here as a coach has proven that."

Teschuk is living proof that Carlson and NDSU's system is working. All that's left to accomplish is up to Teschuk. She's successfully ingrained her reputation on a national stage in the U.S. and Canada, but now, it's her time to show the world what Erin Teschuk can do on the track.

* * *



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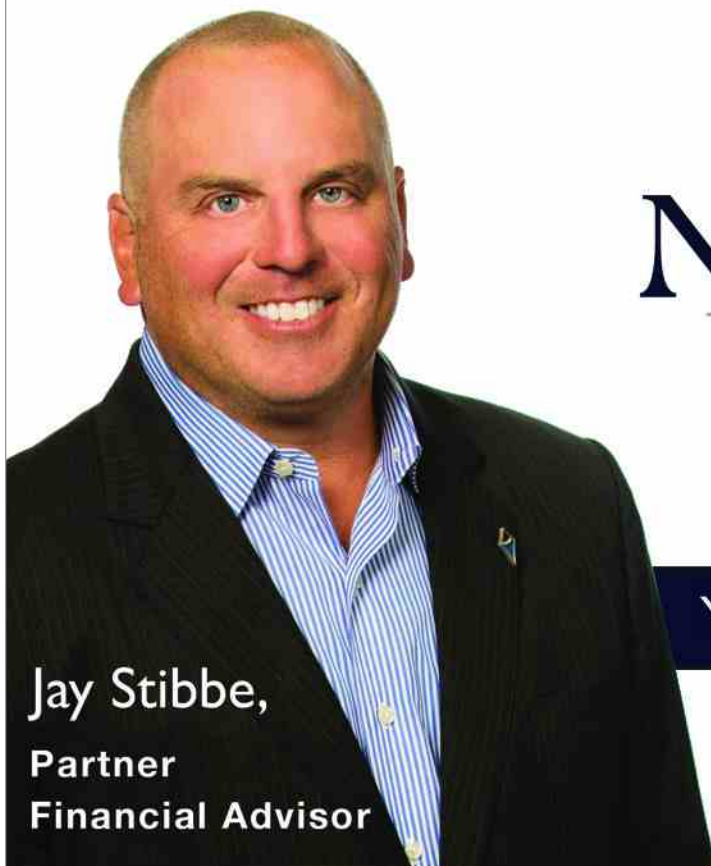


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"I get here, and they were all talking about how good they were going to be this year. Then I played with the guys in open gym, with Taylor (Braun) and Marshall (Bjorklund), and I was like, 'Wow, these guys are good.'"



Paul Miller



WELCOME TO PAUL BALL



Paul Miller is averaging a career-best 16.5 points per game this season. His plan is to return to the lineup before the Summit League tournament during the first weekend in March.

Miller committed before his senior season. He went on to average 19.8 points a game, earned All-State honor and was his conference's Player of the Year. He'd watched NDSU's run in the NCAA Tournament when they beat Oklahoma for the school's first-ever Big Dance victory.

The Waukesha, Wis., native had based much of his decision on what he saw when he visited Fargo that summer.

"I get here, and they were all talking about how good they were going to be this year. Then I played with the guys in open gym, with Taylor (Braun) and Marshall (Bjorklund), and I was like, 'Wow, these guys are good,'" Miller said. "I could tell they definitely cared about the kids as well. I hung out with the guys a lot and just bonded with them."

Two weeks after the Bison's loss to San Diego State, coach Phillips left the program for Ohio. That's when their star recruit received a phone call from the team's leader.

Photo by Paul Flessland

NDSU's leading scorer from a year ago may be gone, but the scoring production hasn't missed a beat. Bison fans can thank Paul Miller for that. The sophomore is having an eyebrow-raising second season.

A scrimmage and a phone call were all it took to reassure Paul Miller that he was making the right decision by continuing his basketball career at North Dakota State.

Recruiting his home state was nothing new for former men's basketball coach Saul Phillips. Many current Bison hail from Wisconsin, including Carlin Dupree and Chris Kading, but ushering the new era and what would be Phillips' final recruiting class stood Miller, a six-foot, five-inch shooting guard from Kettle Moraine High School.

"I got a call from LA (Lawrence Alexander), literally right when the news broke," remembered Miller. "He said, 'Hey Paul, how's it going? How are you feeling (about coming here)?' I said, 'What are you guys doing? Are you all staying?' And he said, 'Yeah, we're staying and we're really hoping you can come too.'"

Alexander's reassurance in the future freshman gave Miller the confidence he needed to stay true to his commitment to North Dakota State. What put his decision over the edge was when current head coach Dave Richman visited his house while Miller was on spring break in Florida.

"He just came and talked to my parents and stuff. My parents really liked him and it assured my parents. I just felt comfortable," said Miller.

Like many freshmen, Miller had his slumps during his freshman campaign last year. What was unlikely was how early his "ah-ha" moment came, or in other words, the moment he and fans realized this kid was the real deal.

Miller scored 17 points in back-to-back games against Kennesaw State and Hampton in late November. The rest of the season was hit or miss, most notably his performance in the Summit League tournament when he only scored 11 points in three games.

But his shooting struggles quit the instant he stepped onto the national stage in the NCAA Tournament.

Miller came off the bench and went toe-to-toe with one of the best perimeter defenders in the country: Kevin Pangos from Gonzaga. Miller wasn't only denying Pangos on defense, he was drilling jump shots right in the grill of the much older senior counterpart.

The freshman's heroics were swept under the rug after NDSU failed to come back and Dexter Werner grabbed the headlines – and rightfully so – with 22 points on 10-of-14 shooting. Miller scored 13 points in 27 minutes and only missed twice, a jumper and free throw.

Miller's sweet stroke could be classified as hereditary. He remembers growing up with his dad, Richard, who coached him and nagged Miller about how great of a shooter he was back in the day.

"I definitely got a lot (better) from him. I've really just had great coaching, my whole career pretty much," said Miller. "Just tweaking little things and that's stuff coaches can see and they helped me improve as I went."

Miller shot 38 percent from the three-point line last year and this season, his average is up to 43 percent before his knee injury against Oral Roberts in February.

"For me, it was holding my follow through," Miller said, explaining how he's improved his jump shot even more this season. "There were a lot of times

where me and coach Richman would be fighting about it. 'Hey coach, I don't have to hold it.' He said, 'Well, you're making 33 percent now and you're not holding it. Hold it and you'll make more.' I gave into him and really worked on holding my follow through for about two seconds and I think that's what really helped me improve my shot this year so much."

From the bench to the starting lineup, Miller's transition was as smooth as possible. He was leading the team in points per game before, as he said, an unfortunate series of events took him out.

For the first time in his basketball playing career, Miller hurt his knee when Werner came crashing down on his leg after losing his balance coming down from a rebound attempt.

"I would say I'll for sure be back at least by the tournament, hopefully sooner, just to get me back in the swing of things," Miller said, watching practice from the sideline just days after the injury. "I know the coaches are trying to take it easy with me and waiting until I'm 100 percent, but I'm already anxious. It's been less than a week. I'm sick of sitting here."

It may be beneficial for NDSU to wait until Miller's knee heals because of what his future has in store. He still has two years left at NDSU and if this season is any indication, Miller will be leading the scoring charge from the perimeter.

Although he denied it as one of his goals, one of the most sacred accomplishments in basketball is the 50-40-90. This means a player shoots at or above 50 percent from the field, 40 percent from three and 90 percent from the free throw line.

Miller has some work to do, but with his redefined shooting form and knack for getting to the rim and laying the ball in, who knows what's possible?

For now, Miller is focused on coming back healthy and contributing to the team for what's left of the season. He's an important pillar for the NDSU men's basketball team and the only way to go from here is up for NDSU's leading scorer.

* * *



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"I do feel like I have high standards for myself, not just from the coaches, but from me. I feel like I need to have a big part in every single game, and I'm going to go into it doing my best. Everybody has a bad game, but I just have to make sure that I'm a leader."



Taylor Thunstedt



NUCLEUS FOR THE FUTURE



In her first year as the starting point guard, **Taylor Thunstedt** is averaging 16.4 points per game and is dishing out assists at a rate of 3.3 a game.

Photos by Paul Flessland

Taylor Thunstedt's first two seasons in a Bison uniform has been nothing short of remarkable. From coming off the bench and playing out of position to becoming one of the top scoring threats on the team, Bison Nation will be dreaming of a brighter future with Thunstedt at the helm.

The first thing head coach Maren Walseth did to Taylor Thunstedt when she joined the Bison women's basketball team was put her out of her comfort zone. Walseth moved her away from the point guard position and moved her to the off-ball guard or the "two" position.

Thunstedt had been a standout guard for New London-Spicer High School and had been receiving attention from colleges across the region since she was a freshman. She averaged nearly 30 points a game her senior year from the point guard position and now she was being moved completely off the ball.

Senior point guard Brooke LeMar was the leading scorer last year and was rarely taken off the court. To prevent Thunstedt from getting lost in the shuffle, Walseth moved her to the only spot on the court where she could make an impact.

In some instances, that impact came from not knowing what was going on within the offense.

"We always laughed because if Taylor didn't know what we were doing, she'll just shoot it," assistant coach Kachine Alexander said. "A lot of the times it goes in, and she was shooting like 47 percent so we weren't mad."

Alexander was right. Thunstedt experienced a high-level of success last year for a true freshman. She shot 43 percent from the field and averaged 8.6 points in nearly 29 minutes per game. Thunstedt made the Summit League All-Newcomer team and was NDSU's Female Rookie of the Year at the inaugural Green & Gold Gala.

By taking Thunstedt out of the point guard position, it relieved a lot of pressure that comes with running the offensive system, Alexander said. Thunstedt was able to worry about one thing, not about facilitating and knowing where everybody needs to be on the court.

"Coach really helped me start at the two position and work my way to the (point) guard, and honestly, coming into the point guard position at the college level, probably would've been really difficult," Thunstedt said. "I could've done it, but it made me a lot more comfortable at the two position to get the plays down and get more talkative that way."

Thunstedt entered the Bison program at a tumultuous time. She wasn't recruited by the current coaching staff and committed before former head coach Carlyn DeHoff resigned after the 2013-14 season.

Originally pegged on the recruiting trail by DeHoff's staff when she was a freshman in high school, Thunstedt didn't have to come to NDSU after officially signing the fall of her senior year at New London-Spicer. After DeHoff left, she remained loyal to her commitment and decided no matter

who was heading up the women's basketball program, NDSU was the place for her.

"I knew Emily Spier before I came here," Thunstedt said. "She was a year older than me and played on the Metro Stars (AAU team) also, so I knew her. I came up here to help with camps, so that was before I came here to even start playing. I was up here for a while before that and met with the team."

The three-sport star at New London-Spicer saw the tradition at NDSU and the fan support the program had in the past. It also helped that her aunt, uncle and three cousins lived in Moorhead and would never miss a game.



The new coaching staff proved they could turn around the program by how they handled Thunstedt's first year. After becoming their weapon off the bench last season, and with LeMar graduating, Thunstedt has made a smooth transition to the point guard position this season.

"As she would definitely attest to, it was a good thing that she started at the two last year because it was one thing. She didn't have to worry about everybody else on the court as a freshman. All she had to worry about was her position and to put the ball in the hole and that's what she was good at," Alexander said. "This year, she's back to her position of being a one and she's definitely grown into that."

Thunstedt and senior Marena Whittle have been the top scorers for the Bison this season. Both players are in the top five in the Summit League in scoring.

Thunstedt has been in the Top 10 for three-point percentage and assists, too.

She's also been able to create scoring opportunities in front of the three-point line. Last year, 73 percent of Thunstedt's shots were three-pointers. This season, that number has dropped to 54 percent.

"The first thing I looked at was to shoot the ball from the three-point line," Thunstedt said. "Now, for me, it's going to be a big thing to get more versatile to drive to the basket and pulling up. That's going to be a lot harder for them to guard me, just because they're so used to me popping and shooting, and if I get that mid-range game, that drive-game down, it's going to be great."

A possible move back to the two-guard isn't out of the question, either. True freshman Megan Gamble has been making strides in her game and, as Thunstedt explained, she's more of a drive-and-kick type of guard. Gamble has struggled to stay on the floor this season, but when healthy, her, Thunstedt and even sophomore Brooke Yaggie will be a formidable backcourt for the next two seasons.

NDSU is near the bottom of the Summit League again this season. But both Thunstedt and Alexander believe that Thunstedt will play a

significant role in the rebuilding process Walseth and her staff are going through.

"Me and coach always have a conversation about me being a leader, being talkative and being that person on the floor that we can go to," Thunstedt said. "That's something I'm really trying to work on right now."

Alexander believes Thunstedt's goals can be as high as she wants them to be. She also mentioned she will continue to be one of the top scorers for the next couple of years.

"I think that with her, the sky is the limit," Alexander said. "She's only a sophomore, which tells you that if she's top in our conference in scoring right now, or close to it, that's just a testament to how high she can go."

* * *



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“Tim Colwell is by far the best captain I’ve ever had, for any sport. All those guys really just showed me what it takes to be successful here. They really showed me the way and I can’t thank those guys enough.”



Ben Petersen





NEXT GENERATION OF **BISON BASEBALL**



Photos by Tyler Ingham, Jacob Funk,
NDSU Athletics

Ben Petersen proved that head coach Tod Brown and assistant coach Dave Pearson were right when the sophomore led the Bison in hitting. This season, he's looking to continue his trajectory into stardom and hopes he can bring his team along for the ride.

When Totino-Grace made the 2012 Minnesota AAA State Baseball Tournament, they weren't expected to make much noise. The Eagles were eliminated in their second game and junior Ben Petersen's breakout all-conference year was over.

Although Totino-Grace was a blip on the state baseball radar in 2012, Petersen made a lasting impression on one college coach in the stands.

Dave Pearson, a nine-year assistant on head coach Tod Brown's staff, was in the bleachers at Dunning Field in St. Paul to watch Totino-Grace play Grand Rapids, Minn. in the first round. Grand

Rapids, home of former Bison baseball players Kyle Kleinendorst and John Skrbec defeated the Eagles 10-1. Petersen had one hit in three plate appearances.

"I think I had a decent game. Nothing too special," remembers the junior right fielder.

But Pearson saw something special in Petersen, who was entering the summer before his senior year, which is the biggest season for high school baseball players with college aspirations.

"Just his fast-twitch (muscles), the ball jumps off his bat unlike most kids and he can really run," Pearson said. "He can pick them up put them down just as good as anybody on the team."

Pearson invited him to NDSU's baseball camp that summer. It turned out to be the most influential stop on Petersen's scouting circuit that summer.

"He came to our camp and we said, 'We could put him in the batting cage and you wouldn't know if he was a high school player or somebody on our team,'" Brown said. "That's because of the amount of pop he has in his bat."

Petersen was offered a scholarship on the spot. He said the decision was easy for him after touring NDSU's campus and learning about the tradition of excellence at this university.

What Brown and Pearson saw in the batting cage and during Petersen's high school career translated quickly. Petersen led the Bison with a .355 batting average in 2015. The outfielder popped three home runs, stole six bases and led the team with 28 runs scored in 49 games. Petersen's effort



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earned him second team All-Summit League honors. He was only one of two Bison to claim a postseason award.

"His talent was good enough to play from day one," Pearson said. "It's just a matter of making the adjustment to college pitching, seeing breaking balls on a full count. They just don't throw fastballs over the middle to see how far you can hit it. He's always handled velocity exceptionally well and I think the next step is understanding how he's being pitched to and scouting reports and all that stuff that happens at the collegiate level. He's made a good adjustment."

Before Petersen made the jump into the starting lineup last season, he had to wait for his chance behind a star-studded outfield his freshman year in 2014.

Tim Colwell – arguably the best Bison baseball player in school history and 2014 Summit League Player of the Year – patrolled center field with three other rotational outfielders in seniors Nick Altavilla and Blake Turbak, and sophomore Jon Hechtner.

"He got limited action, but when he was in there, he showed he could play. He showed that in inter-squad scrimmages all fall," Brown said about Petersen's first year in Fargo. "He was really disciplined at the plate, it was something he really grew into. And the other thing he has worked really hard on is his outfield defense. Those were two things that he really needed to work on but he was extremely talented and aggressive."

The Bison won their first Summit League tournament championship in 2014. As a freshman, Petersen said he learned that NDSU is capable of competing with the best college

teams in the nation, but most of all, he learned from the seniors how to play, practice and act like a college ball player.

"Tim Colwell is by far the best captain I've ever had, for any sport," Petersen said. "All those guys really just showed me what it takes to be successful here. They really showed me the way and I can't thank those guys enough."

Last season didn't end well for NDSU. They made their fifth consecutive Summit League tournament but were the first team eliminated. Petersen is looking to turn his team around this season.

With Colwell still popping his head in and out of practices this offseason, Petersen has grown into one of the true leaders on the team. Even though he doesn't say much, Brown said, his effort in practice speaks volumes to the team.

Petersen will most likely slide back into the number three position in the batting order and graze right field, a position where he threw out two base runners last season.

Both Brown and Pearson emphasized the importance of not only Petersen's production, but the entire lineup's so Petersen will be protected and not pitched around.

"He does a good job of being able to go from at-bat to at-bat without letting the last at-bat affect him," Pearson said, when he mentioned teams already beginning to pitch around Petersen. "As a collective whole, we need to be able to be on top of our game around him so that way he can continue to be that guy for us."

As any leader would say, Petersen isn't worried about being that guy or his personal glory.

"The goal for the team is to combine the 2012 team and the 2014 team to win 40 games and also the Summit League tournament," Petersen said. "I'm not as focused on personal awards or anything like that, but first team all-conference would be special, but I'm just mainly focused on getting wins for the team."

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“I never really settled for last year and I think the whole team has the same mentality, so if we all have the same mentality of getting better, then yes, our scores are getting lower.”



Natalie Roth





LIGHTING THE FIRE

Natalie Roth buried a hole-in-one this fall during NDSU's last tournament in Wahiawa, Hawaii. Her 75.5 strokes per round average is the lowest on the team.

Photos by Dennis Hubbard, Bob Nelson

In only her second season at NDSU, Natalie Roth is emerging as a star for the women's golf team. Her successful freshman campaign has only pushed this Detroit Lakes, Minn., native to make sure she leaves her mark as a Bison.

Growing pains aren't anything new for student-athletes transitioning from the high school golf course to the collegiate fairways. But in sophomore Natalie Roth's case, her first year was what she expected – a success.

The 2015 Summit League Newcomer of the Year shot the lowest score per round on the team and finished fourth place in the Summit League Women's Golf Championship, earning second-team All-Summit League honors. Roth's 76.71 scoring average her freshman year is the best from a freshman at North Dakota State since Amy Anderson in 2010.

"You don't quite know what's going to happen with freshmen," seventh-year head coach Matt Johnson said. "It usually takes awhile to settle in and she had to adjust a little bit early on,

but yeah, I was certainly happy. She probably accomplished a little more than what I expected as a freshman."

Inside the inflated walls of the Dacotah Field Bubble, Roth would rather talk about the accomplishments she has yet to reach. She said her scoring average was great last year and she would like to lower it to the 72 range this season, but like all great college competitors, she's more worried about winning and doing what she can to help the team.

Roth won the 2015 NDSU Fall Kickoff this September and cracked the top five at the South Dakota Coyote Classic.

"I think I'm a huge competitor and I want to win. I mean, I go out there to win every time," Roth said in between strokes with her irons on the mats inside the Bubble. "I might not win every time, but my goal is to win, and so I really would like to see a couple more collegiate wins."

While attending Detroit Lakes High School, Roth learned a thing or two about winning. The Lakers won three straight state and conference championships through Roth's sophomore and senior seasons. She also took home the individual state championship her junior year by shooting a 70.

Johnson said Roth's competitive drive is what stood out to him when he was recruiting her and he knew he had to get her to NDSU.

"We knew about the program in Detroit Lakes, which has been very successful for a long time," Johnson said. "So we knew that they knew how to win and they liked to win. I knew she was competitive."

What has brought her back to Fargo is what originally helped her in a new environment when she moved to Lake Park, Minn., before seventh grade.

Roth was born in Fargo and lived here most of her life with her parents, Jason and Stacey, who work in Moorhead.

The Roths moved to Lake Park into a home on Big Cormorant Lake

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when Natalie was in seventh grade. The move wasn't as simple as a quick summer weekend getaway. To acclimate to the new environment, school and classmates, Roth got herself involved in sports as soon as possible.

Roth played soccer and was a team captain for Detroit Lakes by her senior season. She also took up competitive golf for the first time.

Her grandparents lived off a golf course and she would frequently shoot nine holes with her grandpa. Roth says they're the ones who pushed her and motivated her to pursue the sport in high school and in college.

"It was a lot of fun," Roth said about playing for the Lakers golf team. "I got to travel with my best friends and

get to come here with one of my best friends, Trisa Hutchinson."

Roth's high school teammate, Hutchinson, committed to NDSU at the same time as Roth.

"Trisa and I didn't necessarily like talking about it because there was that competitiveness between us, but that's what kept us going," Roth said. "My high school coach, Cali (Harrier), said, 'Are you okay with going to the same school as Trisa?' and at that point I was just like, 'I would love it.' Going into something with a great friend, and knowing we both push each other the same way, so it turned out really good."

After winning the state title her junior season, Roth was a highly-sought-after high school recruit by a handful of other schools. Johnson said it

may have helped that he formed a relationship with her back when he gave her golfing lessons in Fargo's Sports Bubble when Roth was in middle school.

"I had known her when she was young and we started communicating pretty early on," Johnson said. "There wasn't anything special at that point about her game that could set her apart from other recruits other than the fact I knew she was competitive and they (Detroit Lakes) had a history of winning."

Ultimately, being close to her family made Roth's decision to come to NDSU a no-brainer. After all, she's a self-proclaimed "homebody."

Back in the Dacotah Bubble, Roth is prepping for the second half of her sophomore season. Roth was able to drop her scoring average by one stroke this fall and went out on a high note in October when she hit a hole-in-one in her final round at the Rainbow Wahine Invitational in Hawaii.

Johnson said Roth's game is well rounded for a student-athlete in her second season. He noted her putting game is a facet that she needs to continue improving on to reach her full potential.

To help with every golfer's putting, NDSU Athletics has built a new addition to the Bubble that will be strictly used for putting. Johnson said it won't have all the bells and whistles of a big-time program's facility, but it will accomplish the same short-game objective.

Roth's potential is within reach this season. Johnson said she's the only player on the team that will inquire about the other teams and players at upcoming tournaments.

After finishing second in the Summit League in 2014 and fourth last year, Roth is excited about her and her teammate's opportunity to capture the program's second League championship.

And with the drive and fire of Roth leading the way, a high finish within the conference is only a few putts away for the Bison.

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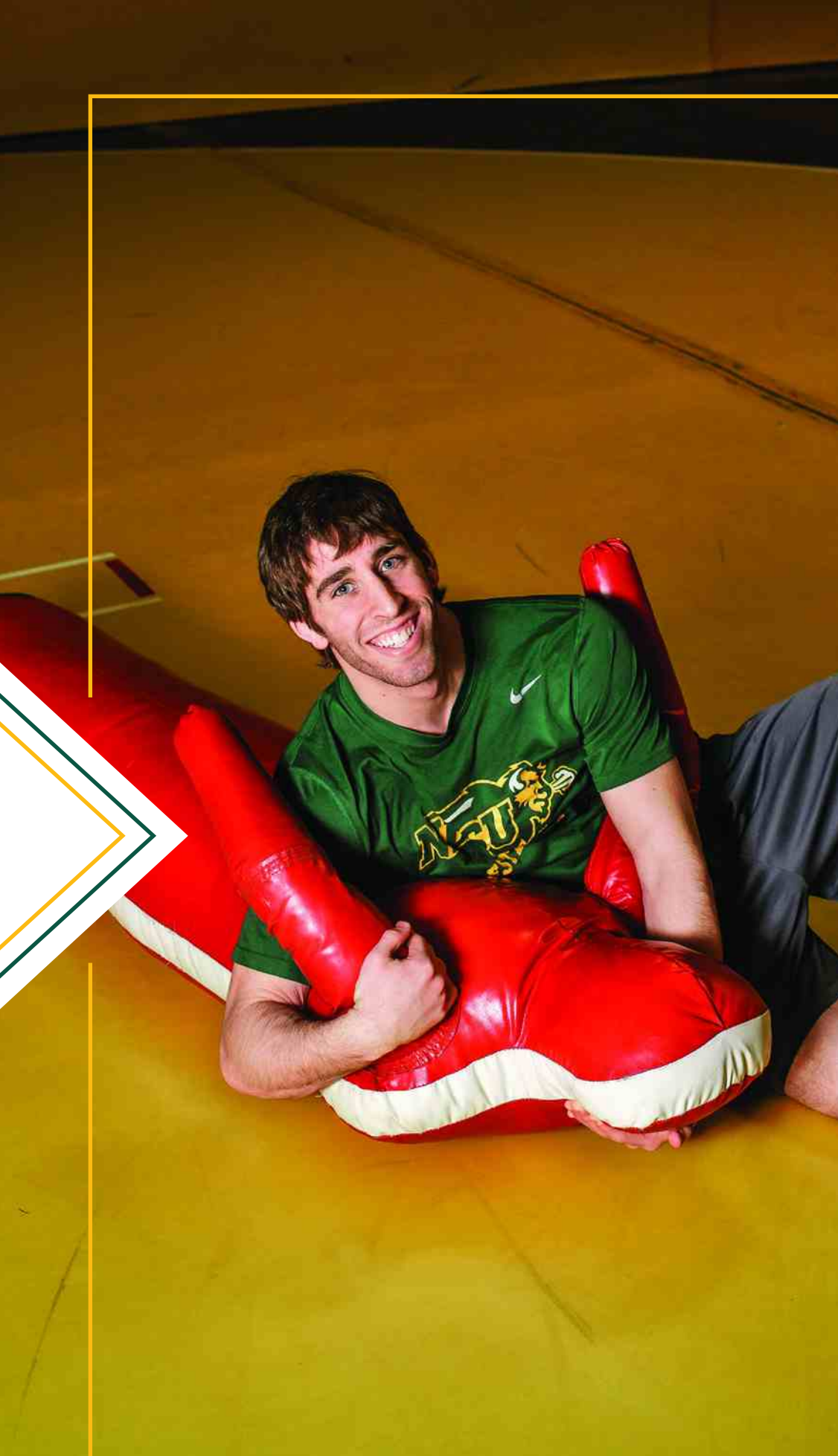
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"I actually called my dad in the beginning of the season my redshirt year and told him, 'I don't think I'm made out to be a college wrestler. I might quit.'"



Clay Ream





EMERGENCY REAM

Photos by Mike Smith/Matshots

There's not another wrestler in the Bison program that has the motor or tenacity of Clay Ream. The aggressive mean-switch is only turned on before hitting the mat, but his challenge now is to make sure it stays on throughout the season.

Boom. The hospital doors fly open and the loud sirens from the ambulance parked outside are screaming. The EMTs come crashing through the swinging doors with a victim who is experiencing a potentially fatal injury. Tubes and wires are wrapped around the stretcher as doctors and nurses take over, rushing the patient down the hallways of the ER. The victim needs surgery or it's over. Who is willing to go behind the mask? Who can grab the scalpel and save this life?

Look no further than North Dakota State's sophomore Clay Ream.

Well, not yet, but the 149-pound wrestler from Wentzville, Mo., can't wait for his opportunity as a trauma surgeon.

For now, Ream isn't battling a life-taking wound or a patient an eyelash away from death. He's battling the

best college wrestlers in the world. Today, he's fighting his personal battle by trying to replicate last season – a season that few freshmen have when he grappled his way to the NCAA Championships.

But before he became one of the five Bison wrestlers representing NDSU at the NAAs, Ream was winning state championships in his home state of Missouri.

During the beginning of summer before his senior year of high school, Ream won a national championship in folk-style. Suddenly, major programs in the Midwest started inquiring about this kid from Holt High School – located 45 minutes west of St. Louis – and who was ranked among the Top-100 high school recruits in the nation.

Head coach Roger Kish invited Ream to Fargo for a visit. It wouldn't be

Ream's first or last official visit, but something about the atmosphere scratched his curiosity about the Bison community.

"It was a family," Ream said. "I felt like I could be myself and joke around and have fun and I didn't get that impression at other places. It felt like people were trying

Ream wasn't just taking a beating in practice. He took a redshirt his first year in Fargo. This meant he could wrestle in selected tournaments, but would do so unattached so it had no affect on the team overall. The beating continued.

After Ream was defeated in a major decision against



to be my friend because coach told them, 'Hey, befriend this kid.' But here, it felt natural."

By the end of the summer, Kish had his guy. Ream committed to NDSU before the fall semester began. He finished his senior year with a 52-1 record and a state championship in Missouri's Class 4, the highest in the state.

Ream struggled his first season at NDSU. As most star high school wrestlers realize, the college mat is unforgiving, especially when you partner with All-American Steven Monk in practice.

"He beat me up every single day," said Ream with a laugh as he points to a spot on the mat where it all happened.

a wrestler from Concordia-Moorhead, he'd had enough. Frustration had carried him to his lowest point.

"I actually called my dad," Ream said. "I told him, 'I don't think I'm made out to be a college wrestler. I might quit.' I was facing guys that weren't D-I and they were the smaller schools and I was like 'Jeez, if I can't beat these guys, then how am I going to beat D-I guys?' I said, 'I don't think I can do this.' I was coming from high school where I always won to this, where I'm losing. It was a hard transition to understanding that losing is a process."

Patrick Ream, Clay's dad, told his son over the phone to stick it out. He told him he could make the transition like many of his teammates. This is when Ream's attitude changed.



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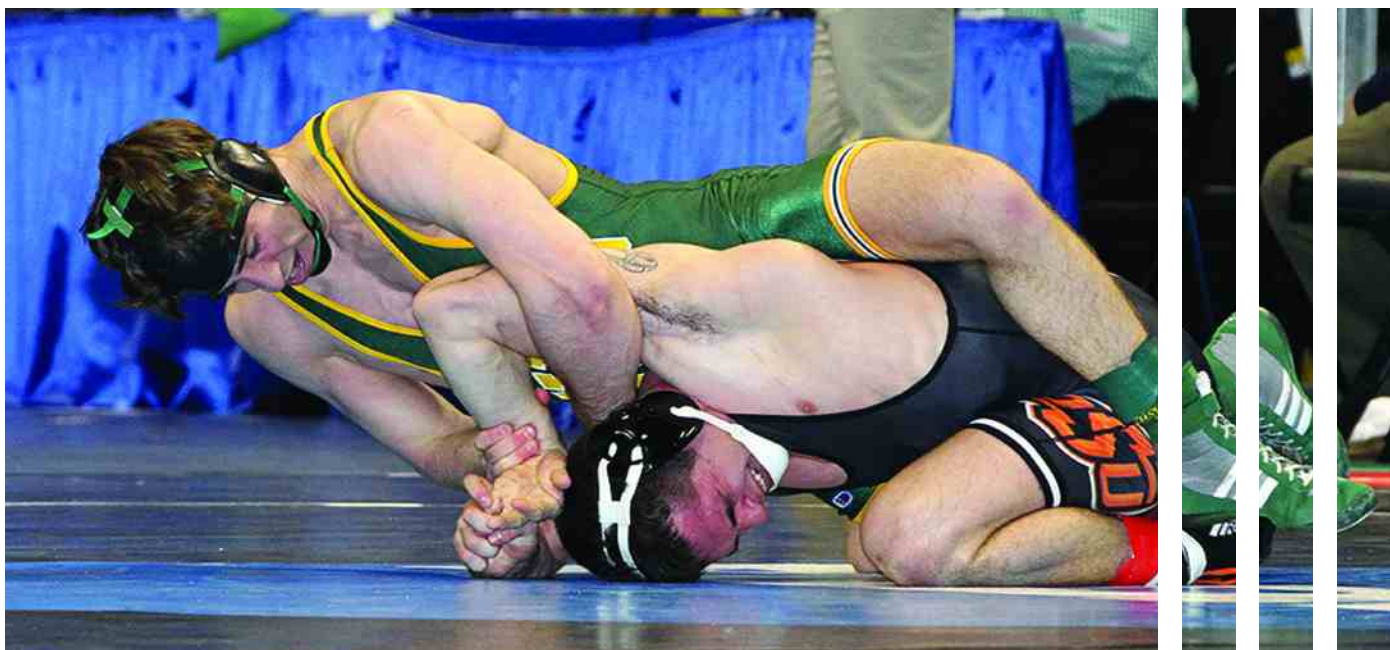






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"Two weeks before Christmas break, I just decided I haven't been wrestling," Ream said. "I went out there scared on the mat, scared to face these college guys. I decided I at least want to lose wrestling giving my best, and so when I started going out there with that mentality, I started winning more and more."

After coming back to Fargo after the holiday break, Ream found a groove. He won eight of his last nine matches of the 2013-14 season, won his weight class at the Ridgewater Open and placed second in the Briar Cliff Open.

Ream moved down to the 149-weight class from the 157-classification to begin the 2014-15 season. He was now a year more experienced and a year smarter. Kish gave him his vote of confidence to represent the team at his weight. In his first dual, he was surgical, pinning the No. 10-ranked Virginia's TJ Miller and caught the attention of the coaching staff.

"He's very physical, very physical, very aggressive," assistant coach Manny Rivera said. "He's not a mean person, but he wrestles pretty mean. If you watch him, it's not the prettiest or the smoothest, but it's definitely effective."

Ream finished his redshirt freshman campaign with a 25-13 record, qualified for the NCAA Championships by winning the

Western Wrestling Conference/ West Region championship at 149 and was named Western Wrestling Conference Freshman of the Year.

Ream's 2-2 record at the NAAs was more than a .500 performance. It was a learning experience he's been able to take with him into this season.

"I know that any match is winnable coming away from the NCAA experience," Ream said. "I wrestled some high-level guys and I won those matches. I came close to winning another one before I got knocked out of the tournament. It helps knowing I'm at that level. Well, I can be. If I perform my very best, I could get an All-American. I could face these guys that you see that are on the top of the charts."

Rivera said he met the expectations the coaching staff had put on the former Top-100 recruit. He continued, saying it was just the beginning for Ream, who he still thinks could have finished even better than 2-2 at the NCAA Championships.

This season has been an eye-opener for Ream. Coming off a wildly successful freshman season, the wins have yet to add up this year and he has found himself just above .500 in his matches and unranked.

"He's had some good wins, some very good wins, but he's had some

questionable losses," Rivera said. "Even sometimes he'll look good in one match during a tournament, then his next match he's not the same guy out there."

Rivera also noted the inconsistencies in Ream's performances, especially in tournaments, due to the lack of nutrition. But he added it's a part of the learning process.

"This season has not gone to plan at all," Ream said. "I expected to be winning more high-level matches, but I've only won a couple so I feel like that hurt me a little bit for rankings and stuff. But I just keep thinking, all that matters is the conference (tournament)."

Rivera and Ream both agree he can be an All-American-caliber wrestler. That's the expectation and the biochemistry student isn't expecting anything less from this season.

While the battles in the trauma room are in the future, Ream is now confronted with a challenge of putting back together his NCAA Championships form. He said he feels the peak coming this season, and for the rest of the conference, it may be too late to implement a state of emergency for future Dr. Ream.

* * *

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"I remember I got a couple calls from Ryun (Godfrey) and I didn't pick up because I was just really nervous. So I was listening to the voicemails and said, 'Ugh, I better call him back.' So I finally called him back and said, 'I'm interested.'"



Rose Jackson





NO BED OF ROSES

Photos by Richard Svaleson

When a face and hamstring injury slowed down Rose Jackson, she was still talented enough to be considered a top three indoor multi-event athlete. The rest of the Summit League now knows they're in trouble if her health ever reaches 100 percent.

Rarely do you hear of a track and field athlete sustaining a facial injury. For junior Rose Jackson, a collision with her knee and face proved anything is possible while competing in any kind of athletic event.

Jackson is a multi-event athlete on the Bison track and field team. Along with other individual events, Jackson has been transformed into one of the best heptathlon and pentathlon athletes on the team.

During the indoor season, women multi-event athletes compete in the pentathlon, which is a combination of five events encompassing every element of track and field. The

60-meter hurdles, high jump, shot put, long jump and 800-meter dash are included and whoever collects the most overall points wins.

After placing fourth in the Summit League Indoor Championships her true freshman season, Jackson was a perennial favorite to finish in the top three. But a fluke injury almost put her out of contention early in the competition last season.

The second event of the first day of competition was the high jump. Jackson admits it isn't her best event, but when she fell back onto the mat after clearing the bar, she kneed herself in the face, knocking four of her upper teeth backward. Quickly, the pain turned into triumph.

"It was a blur," Jackson said, trying to explain the moment. "I PR'd, though."

Jackson jumped her career-best five-feet-two-and-one-fourth inches and placed sixth in the event. The problem was, she had three more events to go, and a lot of points to make up after finishing sixth in the 60-meter hurdles prior to her freak injury while high jumping.

Thank God Jackson's mother is a dentist.

"My mom was here and she's a dentist, so she said, 'It's okay Rose,' and then she just pushed them back," Jackson said. "It was kind of gross."

With her teeth set properly, Jackson courageously fought through the pain and won the shot put and 800-meter run. She finished with 3,553 points, placing her third and was honored as an All-Summit League performer.

Jackson capped her sophomore season by winning the Summit League Outdoor Championship in the heptathlon (seven events). Jackson registered career bests in javelin and 100-meter hurdles during the meet.

As brutal as a facial injury could seem, it hasn't been slowing her down. In fact, a hamstring injury sustained during the Jack Johnson Classic in January 2015 has lingered for over a year.

"It happened last year and it's just been iffy," Jackson said. "That's why I've been

cautious about sprinting and I haven't been competing in the early meets much. You just have to know your body and know if you go past a certain limit, you might hurt yourself, but you have to know that you have to try at least."

Jackson added that many of her favorite events that induce quick, explosive movements have been on hold for now. She hopes to feel well enough to compete in 60- and 100-meter dashes at the end of the season. In the meantime, she isn't letting her bum hamstring stop her from competing overall, which is a scary thought for her competition, who are hoping they never see the Willmar, Minn., native at full strength.



"I think if we can get through a season without injury, there's a lot of potential," head women's track and field coach Stevie Keller said. "Right now, it's not there, but it will get there eventually."

Keller explained that Jackson can be competitive at 80 percent, but they'll be carefully monitoring and adjusting her training until she feels 100 percent.

Jackson originally came to NDSU as a sprinter. She was a seven-time state track and field placewinner and holds Willmar High School's long jump record.

It was Jackson's first high school coach in Detroit Lakes, Minn., that made the connection between her and NDSU. Jackson moved to Willmar her freshman year of high school but her coach Mike Labin still had her contact information. He passed it along to then-NDSU head

coach Ryun Godfrey when he inquired about Jackson.

"I was really nervous. I was like, 'Why are you calling me?'" Jackson said with a giggle, explaining her shyness and her apprehension about talking to a Division I coach. "I remember I got a couple calls from Ryun (Godfrey) and I didn't pick up because I was just really nervous. So I was listening to the voicemails and said, 'Ugh, I better call him back.' So I finally called him back and said, 'I'm interested.'"

Jackson fell in love with the atmosphere NDSU had to offer along with the short distance from home. She's pursuing a math degree and is quick to note

another not-so-important factor in coming to NDSU: "Also, it's close to Detroit Lakes and it's green. Green is my favorite color."

You'll notice green coming from Jackson's mouth today. It's her green and yellow mouth guard she's been using since her high-jump, knee-to-face accident. The mouth guard is a nice touch and it doesn't surprise Keller.

"Not just athletically, but mentally, she's one of those people that

brushes things off pretty quick," Keller said. "Sometimes I wonder, when she has something good, I'd like to see a little more enthusiasm and excitement, but sometimes too much of that can affect the next event, too. She's pretty level-headed."

Battling her sore hamstring has been challenging and frustrating for Jackson. She has remained involved in competitions by competing in extended running competitions such as the 200, 400 and 400 relay races.

Hamstring injury or not, Jackson expects to be at the top of the pentathlon events this winter and heptathlon this spring. And for the sake of her competition, they could use a sore Jackson, just so they can keep up with one of the most well-rounded track athletes on the women's side in the Summit League.

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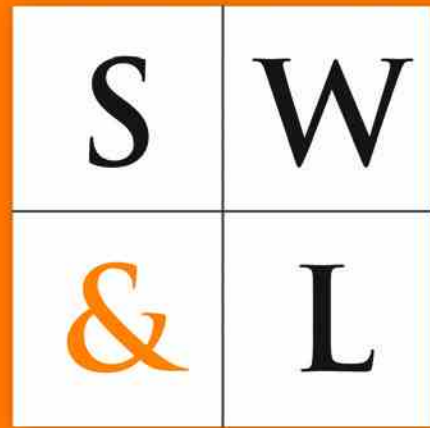
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ALEX RENNER

Class – Junior

Hometown – Watertown, S.D.

Shot Put Style – Glide

PERSONAL BESTS

(Event-Distance-NDSU All-Time Rank)

Indoor Shot Put – 61-3 – #1

Outdoor Shot Put – 61-3 – #1

Weight Throw – 58-3 ¾

Discus – 131-5

Hammer Throw – 201-5 – #2

What does your national ranking in the shot put mean to you?

"It's a goal to make Indoor Nationals this year, but I know it's out of my control where all I can do is go out there and compete each weekend and try to make it into the top 16. I have a great coach and great teammates. I just thank God for this opportunity, and so I just give all the credit to Jesus, my savior, honestly."

CONRAD SCHWARZKOPF

Class – Junior

Hometown – Bismarck, N.D.

Shot Put Style – Glide

PERSONAL BESTS

(Event-Distance-NDSU All-Time Rank)

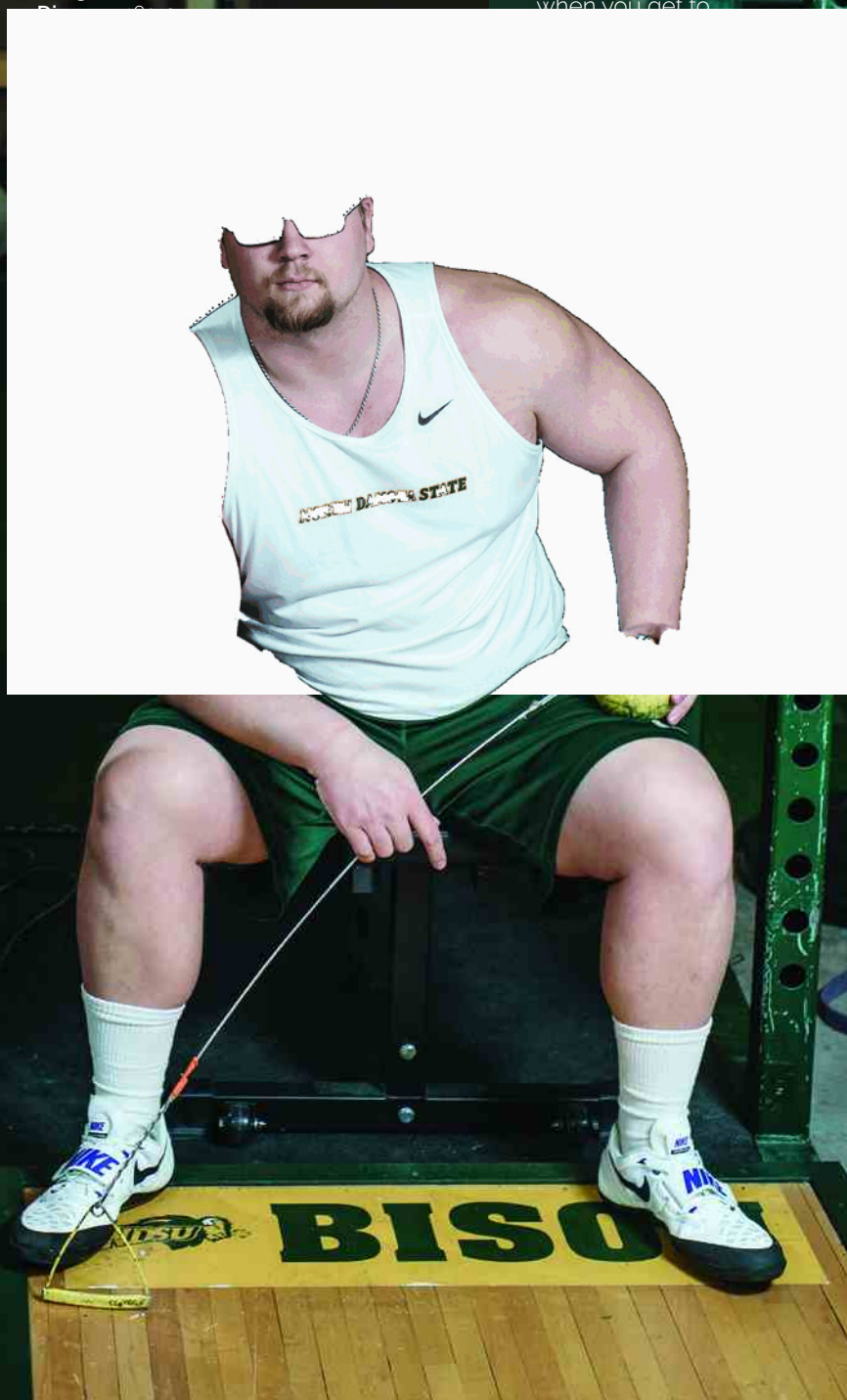
Indoor Shot Put – 57-11 ¾ – #4

Outdoor Shot Put – 54-10 – #6

Weight Throw – 64-6 – #1

How rare is it that the top five shot putters in NDSU history are all on the same team at the same time?

"It's pretty wild. It's fun having these guys because every day in practice is pretty much a competition. It really helps when you get to



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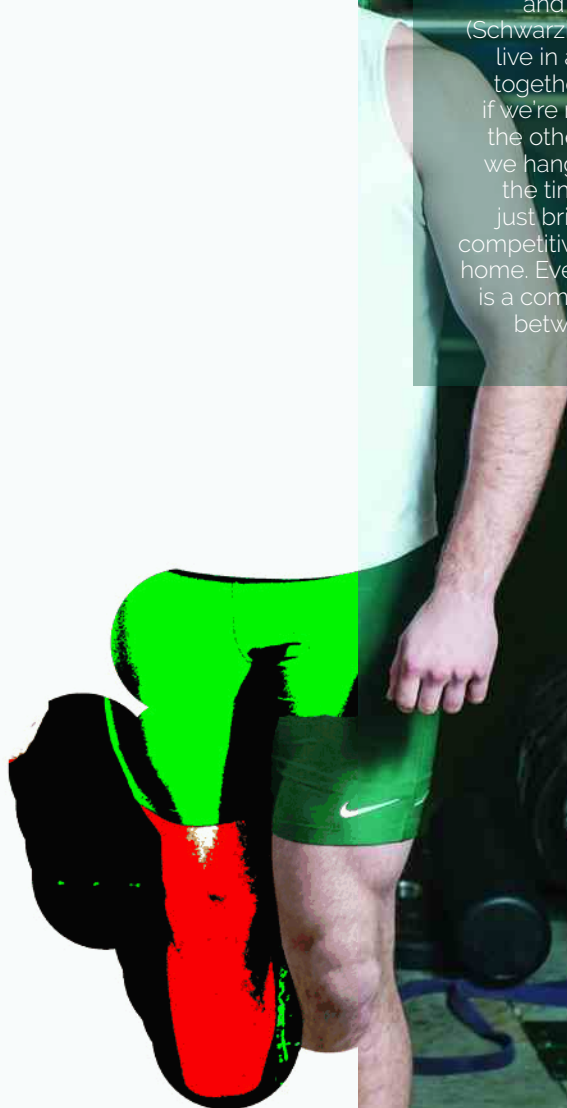




How did this tight bond develop within the throwing group?

"I'd say right away, with all the time we spend with each other, we all just immediately became friends.

A lot of us live together. Steffan (Stroh) has lived with Brandt (Berghuis) in the past and now, me, him, Brian (Blasey) and Conrad (Schwarzkopf) all live in a house together. Even if we're not with the other guys, we hang out all the time. That just brings the competitive edge home. Everything is a competition between us."



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BRIAN BLASEY

Class – Junior

Hometown – Ada, Minn.

Shot Put Style – Spin

PERSONAL BESTS

(Event-Distance-NDSU All-Time Rank)

Indoor Shot Put – 53-9 $\frac{3}{4}$

Outdoor Shot Put – 52-10

Weight Throw – 55-7

Discus – 165-2 – #10

Hammer Throw – 161-10



Coming from a small school, what was it like entering a program with a lot of throwing talent?

"(Alex) Renner and I came in together and we're the only freshmen that are left out of that group.

He's the one that coached me through some things because I hadn't lifted in my high school. I didn't have a coach in high school besides my uncle who coached me a little bit. Watching (Alex) Renner, Brandt (Berghuis) and those guys just showed me the way, which is pretty incredible, and I definitely wouldn't be anywhere without those guys."





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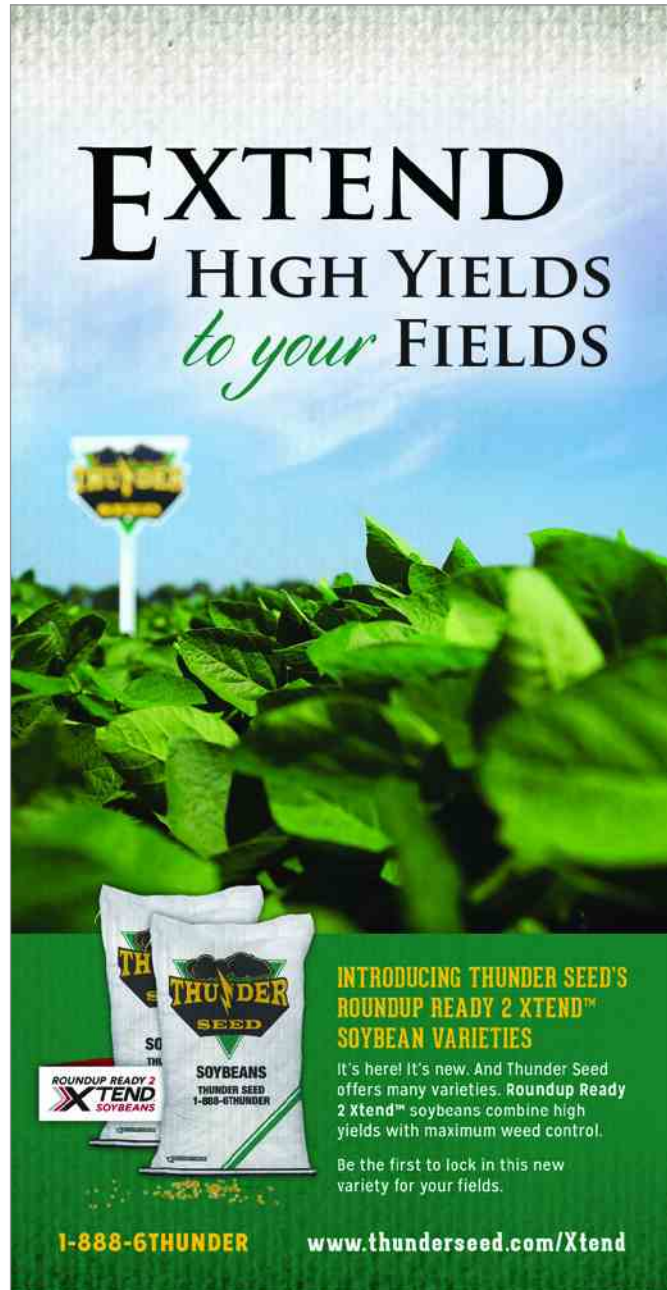
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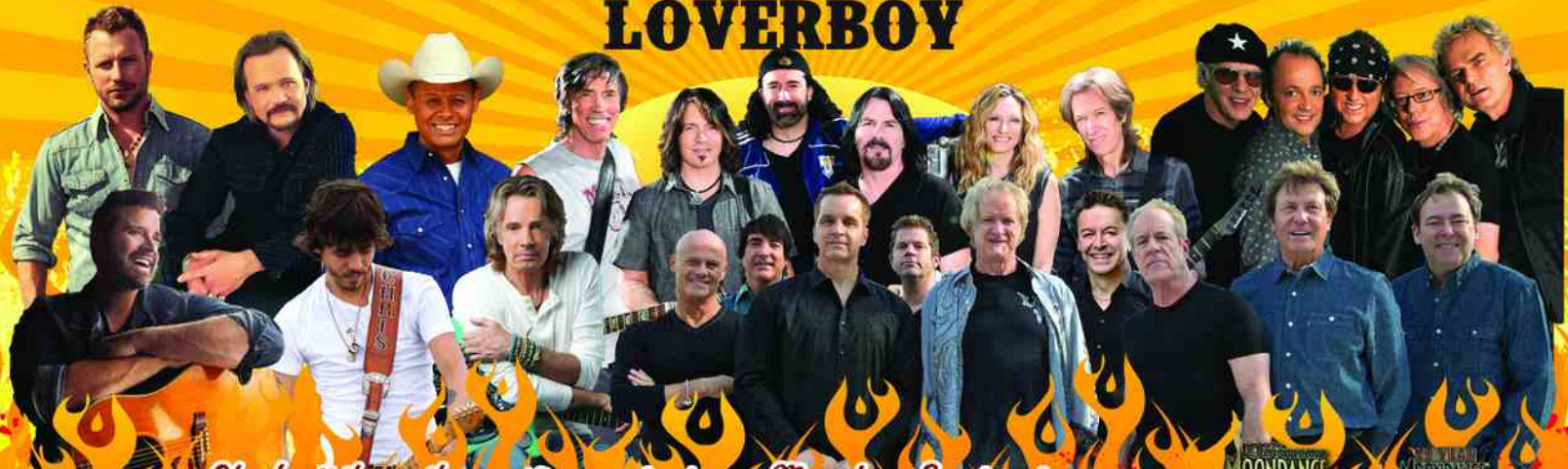
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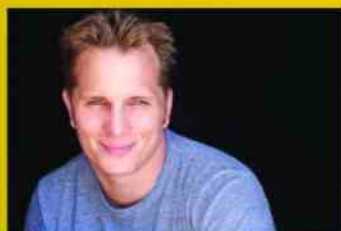


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HOW:

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PRICE:

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LAST YEAR

North Dakota State won their second consecutive men's Summit League Tournament championship last season, defeating South Dakota State, 57-56. Lawrence Alexander was named the Tournament MVP and voted to the all-tournament team along with AJ Jacobson.

In the battle for South Dakota, South Dakota State defeated the University of South Dakota 72-57 for the women's Summit League Tournament championship.

IN WITH THE NEW

Omaha is eligible for its first Summit League Tournament this season. After a five-year reclassification window from Division II, Omaha is currently sitting third in the men's standings and sixth in the women's standings.

With the addition of Omaha's eligibility, the last team in the regular season standing will not qualify for the Summit League tournament.

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BASEBALL

TEAM TRAVEL DESTINATIONS

OH, THE PLACES
YO'LL GO

FROM FLORIDA TO TEXAS TO
PLAY LAMAR,
THE BISON BASEBALL SCHEDULE
WILL TAKE THEM FAR,
A SEASONED LINEUP AND BETTER
PITCHING.
NDSU WILL ENTER THE
CONFERENCE PLAY WISHING,
ANOTHER SUMMIT LEAGUE
CHAMPIONSHIP IS ON THE
HORIZON.
IT'S GOING TO BE ANOTHER WILD,
WILD SEASON FOR THE BISON.

1 **DESTINATION** - PINE BLUFF, ARKANSAS
OPPONENT - ARKANSAS-PINE BLUFF
MILES ROUND TRIP - 1,820 MILES

2 **DESTINATION** - BEAUMONT, TEXAS
OPPONENT - LAMAR
MILES ROUND TRIP - 2,341 MILES

3 **DESTINATION** - PORT CHARLOTTE,
FLORIDA
OPPONENTS - MAINE, ST. BONAVENTURE,
BOSTON COLLEGE
MILES ROUND TRIP - 3,185 MILES

4 **DESTINATION** - PORT CHARLOTTE,
FLORIDA
OPPONENTS - CENTRAL MICHIGAN,
WESTERN MICHIGAN, MICHIGAN STATE,
ARMY (CLEARWATER, FLA.)
MILES ROUND TRIP - 3,185 MILES

5 **DESTINATION** - MACOMB, ILLINOIS
OPPONENT - WESTERN ILLINOIS
MILES ROUND TRIP - 1,078

6 **DESTINATION** - OMAHA, NEBRASKA
OPPONENT - NEBRASKA-OMAHA
MILES ROUND TRIP - 782

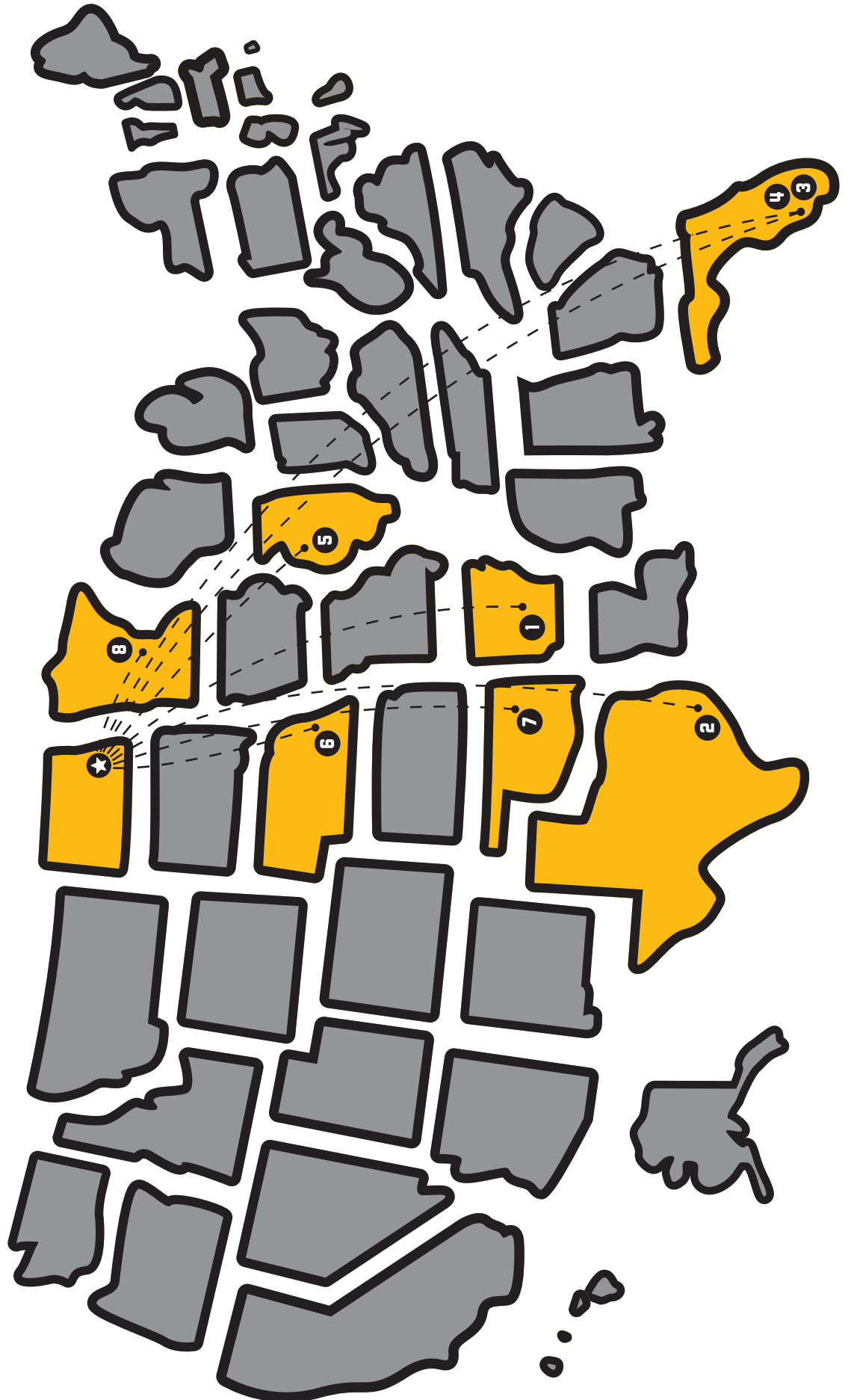
7 **DESTINATION** - TULSA, OKLAHOMA
OPPONENT - ORAL ROBERTS
MILES ROUND TRIP - 1,486

8 **DESTINATION** - MINNEAPOLIS,
MINNESOTA
OPPONENT - MINNESOTA
MILES ROUND TRIP - 429



BASEBALL
TOTAL MILES - 14,306

TEAM TRAVEL DESTINATIONS





SOFTBALL

TEAM TRAVEL DESTINATIONS

OH, THE PLACES
YOU'LL GO

DARREN MUELLER HAS CRAFTED A DREAM, FOR HIS GIRLS, THE TWO-TIME DEFENDING CHAMPIONSHIP SOFTBALL TEAM. THEY'LL FLY TO TEXAS, THEN TO CALIFORNIA. THE SOFTBALL TEAM'S JOURNEY WILL FAIL TO BORE YA, WITH STOPS IN HONOLULU AND LOUISVILLE ALONG THE WAY. THEY'LL TAKE TALENTS TO STANFORD TO PROVE THEMSELVES NEAR THE BAY.

4 DESTINATION - TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

OPPONENTS - DEPAUL, ALABAMA,
LOUISIANA-MONROE
MILES ROUND TRIP - 2,125 MILES

5 DESTINATION - HONOLULU, HAWAII

OPPONENTS - BAYLOR, CAL, HAWAII
MILES ROUND TRIP - 7,611 MILES

6 DESTINATION - COLLEGE PARK, MARYLAND

OPPONENTS - BINGHAMTON, MARYLAND,
UMASS, BOSTON
MILES ROUND TRIP - 2,279 MILES

7 DESTINATION - AMES, IOWA

OPPONENT - IOWA STATE
MILES ROUND TRIP - 739

1 DESTINATION - AUSTIN, TEXAS

OPPONENTS - ARKANSAS, NORTH
CAROLINA, TEXAS
MILES ROUND TRIP - 2,300 MILES

2 DESTINATION - STANFORD, CALIFORNIA

OPPONENTS - SAINT MARY'S
(CALIFORNIA), STANFORD, LONG BEACH
STATE
MILES ROUND TRIP - 2,895 MILES

3 DESTINATION - LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

OPPONENTS - KENT STATE, LOUISVILLE,
CLEVELAND STATE
MILES ROUND TRIP - 1,636 MILES

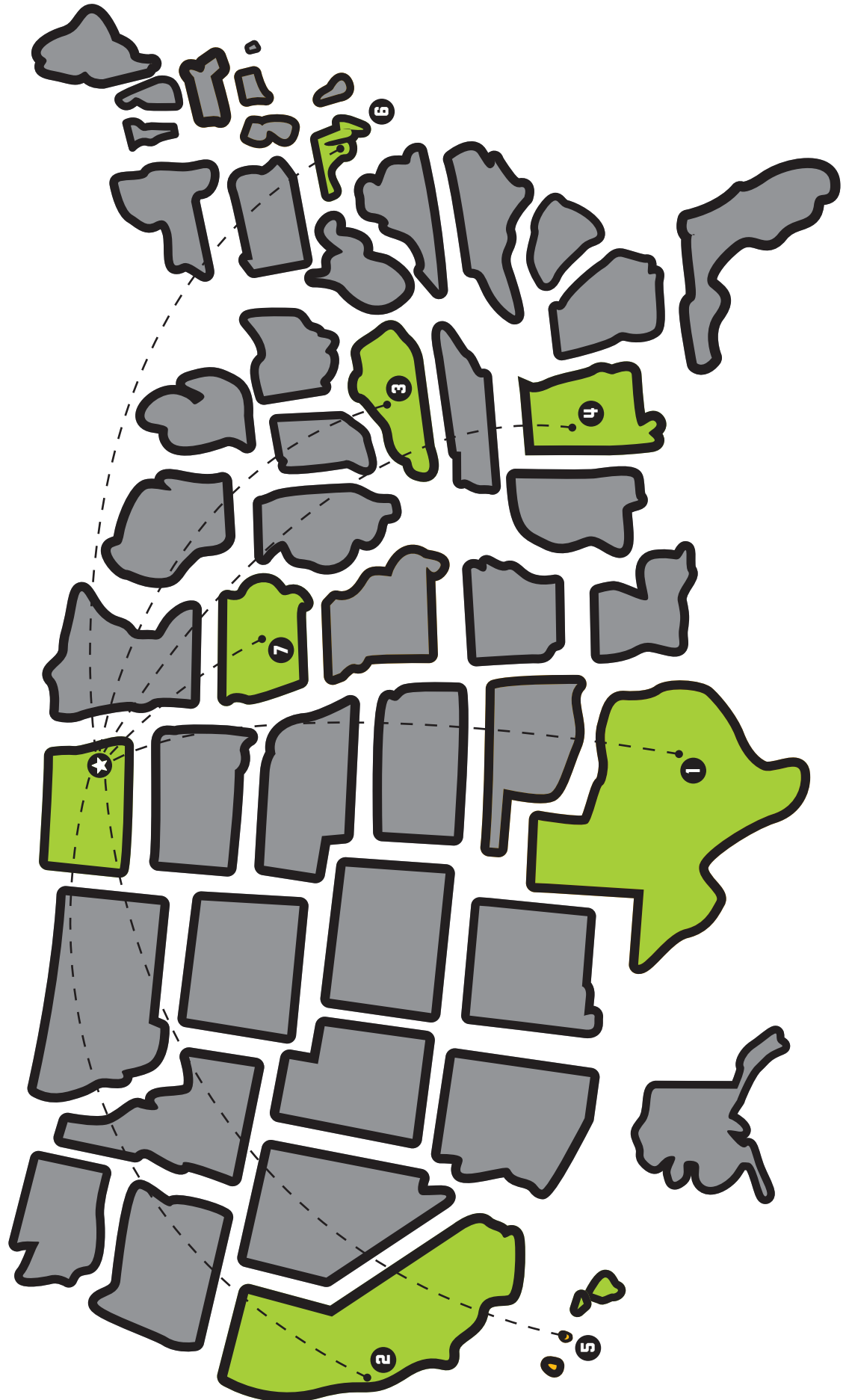


SOFTBALL

TOTAL MILES - 19,585

MILES FROM NEW YORK TO LOS ANGELES - 2,448

TEAM TRAVEL DESTINATIONS





SIGNING THE FUTURE

By Joe Kerlin

Photos by Paul Flessland

The only guarantee on National Signing Day is that out of the 26 new Bison football players, not all of them are going to be as advertised. But, as we've seen in the past, one signing class does not define a program.





NDSU hosted their annual Signing Day Party at the Ramada Plaza Suites Crystal Ballroom. Bison fans, former players and current coaches and administrators joined to celebrate the 2016 football and soccer recruiting classes. Assistant Athletic Director for Marketing and Fan Engagement Justin Swanson, Director of Athletics Matt Larsen, head football coach Chris Klieman and head soccer coach Mark Cook addressed the crowd from the stage.

As of today, there are 12 seniors on the 2016 version of the Bison football team. This senior class consists of two transfers, four members of the 2013 recruiting class and only six from the 2012 class. Originally, there were 23 members of the 2012 class. This goes to show that you never know what will happen over the course of five years.

NDSU's also seen the fruits of a great recruiting class. In 2010, the Bison brought in 21 true freshmen and 16 finished their careers at NDSU. When you have a class that consists of Ryan Smith, Zach Vraa, Billy Turner and Kyle Emanuel, chances are you're going to see them churn out five national championships. But what about this 2016 class, will they continue the success their predecessors left them with?

CONGRATS to the BISON on 5 NATIONAL TITLES

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Head football coach **Chris Klieman** addresses the Signing Day Party crowd along with the five national championship trophies.



The 2016 recruiting class goes 26-deep, with 16 earning scholarships and 10 preferred walk-ons. Seven states are represented with Minnesota and North Dakota leading the way with eight and six recruits, respectively.

CLOSING THE BORDER

Carson Wentz is example No. 1 when it comes to the importance of keeping in-state talent in North Dakota. Chris Klieman expressed the importance of closing the border so no FCS or FBS schools can come in and sweep up the talent out from under NDSU's nose.

"We're going to win the state of North Dakota," Klieman said. "Coach (Randy) Hedberg does a phenomenal job in the state of North Dakota. He's got such a great reputation with the coaches and the players."

The recruits from North Dakota include four offensive linemen. If you look up and down the NDSU roster, you'll see multiple big-bodied "rams" from North Dakota. To keep the tough-nosed tradition of developing tough, hardworking linemen such as Jack Plankers and Luke Bacon, there's no need for Klieman to look anywhere else but North Dakota.

"Obviously, there's a development side of things," Klieman said. "But I think those kids in the state of

North Dakota realize, 'Boy, look at a kid like Landon Lechler, who started here at 240 pounds. Look at where he's at today.' We're excited about keeping all those kids in-state."

CAMP KIDS

NDSU's summer football camps have been invaluable for the program over the years. Klieman recites a stat given to him by camp coordinator and fullback and tight ends coach Tyler Roehl, that 73 percent of the 2015 roster had participated in an NDSU football camp.

It's more than just getting them up to Fargo and to see the campus, the camps also provide an in-depth scouting report of potential recruits for the coaching staff.

"Our camp, I think, is the best there is in the Midwest because a lot of schools and teams are going for one day, from 11 to 3, do some agility testing with you, work out for an hour and then decide if we're going to give you a scholarship," Klieman said. "In our mind, that's not enough time. In our mind, we need to be able to see you, spend two and a half



2016 RECRUITING CLASS

SCHOLARSHIP

Adam Cofield - Running Back
Lee's Summit, Mo.

Jabril Cox - Linebacker
Raytown, Mo.

Felix Dixon - Defensive Back
Clearwater, Fla.

Sean Engel - Wide Receiver
Chaska, Minn.

Cameron Hackl - Defensive Tackle / Green Bay, Wis.

Ben Hecht - Offensive Lineman
Shawnee, Kan.

Darren Kelley - Defensive Back
Baltimore, Md./NDSCS

Ross Kennelly - Linebacker
Superior, Wis.

Jackson Koonce - Punter
Oceanside, Calif. / SMU

Braydon Lund - Tight End
Minot, N.D.

Moses Nyangacha - Linebacker
Robbinsdale, Minn.

Beau Pauly - Linebacker
Becker, Minn.

Dillon Radunz - Offensive Lineman / Becker, Minn.

Karson Schoening - Offensive Lineman / Rolla, N.D.

Henry Van Dellen - Quarterback
Plymouth, Minn.

Cordell Volson - Offensive Lineman / Balfour, N.D.





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days with those guys to see how they respond from the first day, to see how they interact with us as coaches."

Fifty to 60 coaches from other programs come to Fargo to evaluate camp participants. NDSU has the advantage of seeing their potential recruits over a multiple-day period instead of looking at test results and tape to make a final decision on whether they want to make an offer or not.

Klieman said 20 of the 26 recruits in the 2016 class were at the NDSU summer camps.

FENDING OFF THE FBS

NDSU has won five straight national championships. You know that, we know that and so does every FBS school. This makes it easy for many FBS schools to double check a recruit they've already crossed off the list if NDSU is targeting a certain player.

This season, NDSU saw Missouri put in a late preferred walk-on offer to Dillon Radunz, an offensive line recruit from Becker, Minn. He declined the offer and decided to keep his commitment to NDSU.

"We've built the relationships with a lot of these guys for so long that when somebody does come in late and try to offer them and take them away," Klieman said. "I think our staff does a phenomenal job of making sure that we've built that relationship with a young man and he knows it as well and we're able to hold a number of those FBS schools off."

Klieman added, "I'll tell you what I'm excited about is, a lot of these guys on this sheet had FBS offers and said, 'Nope, we're going to be Bison.'"

When Director of Athletics Matt Larsen implemented cost-of-attendances for every program at NDSU, it also gave NDSU an edge on the recruiting trail. Implementing the stipend for scholarship athletes allowed NDSU to offer everything an FBS school would.

"I know some schools are pushing the envelope to try and do it, but I know this, it was a huge factor for us," Klieman said.

* * *



2016 RECRUITING CLASS

PREFERRED WALK-ONS

Quinn Alo - Offensive Lineman
LaMoure, N.D.

Matt Biegler - Tight End
Underwood, Minn.

Ross Godfrey - Defensive Back
Sioux City, Iowa

Trevor Heit - Wide Receiver
Pepin, Wis.

Josh Howieson - Offensive Lineman
Baxter, Minn.

Cole Jacob - Wide Receiver
Medina, Minn.

Victor Kizewski - Defensive Back
Stevens Point, Wis.

Zach Kubas - Offensive Lineman
Dickinson, N.D.

Zak Kuntz - Fullback
Grand Forks, N.D.

Garret Wegner - Punter
Lodi, Wis.





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WH ARE NO

NEIL WAGNER

MLB PITCHER



By Austin Kettelhut
Photos Courtesy of Toronto Blue Jays, Skip Milos/
Tampa Bay Rays and North Dakota State Athletics

Neil Wagner is no stranger to adversity. His journey from North Dakota State to Major League Baseball is littered with hardship and misfortune. Yet, almost 11 years later, the one and only former Bison to play in the MLB is still fighting for his dream.



Neil Wagner spent the 2013 and 2014 seasons pitching in relief for the Toronto Blue Jays. He's now in the Tampa Bay Rays organization.

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Scouts had once pegged Wagner as a potential pick in the first five rounds of the MLB draft, but a dismal junior season at NDSU marked the beginning of the many trials he would face in pursuit of one day pitching in the big leagues.

During his sophomore campaign with the Bison in 2004, Wagner blistered the competition with a 1.40 earned run average and 59 strikeouts in 38.2 innings of play. His primary pitch was a fastball that rounded out at about 96 miles per hour, and he didn't need much else.

Between his sophomore and junior year, Wagner pitched for the Mankato Moondogs during the summer in the Northwoods League. While in Mankato, he suffered an injury that was misdiagnosed and so ensued his year-long struggle.

"There were a couple of things," said Wagner. "I had a stress fracture to my knee cap that summer that got misdiagnosed as tendinitis. The next year we had a new strength coach

and a new pitching coach, a good pitching coach, but a new pitching coach, and making the move to Division I. And you know, I was putting a lot of pressure on myself as well."

Wagner's numbers dipped significantly his junior season, sporting a lofty 8.07 ERA in 35.2 innings pitched.

Wagner became eligible for the 2005 MLB draft following his junior year, but expectations were not as high as they once were.

"Having conversations with scouts, and these scouts are not the people who make the final decisions, but I felt pretty confident that I was going to fall somewhere close to that late single digits, early dozen rounds or so," said Wagner.

As day one of the draft came and went, Wagner became disconcerted. It was not until the 21st round that the Cleveland Indians drafted him and he understandably had a mix of emotions.

"It was honestly kind of a sense of relief. I felt that it was a pretty good



situation that I was going into so I was pretty excited, but relief mainly at that moment," said Wagner.

Wagner would spend the next four seasons in the Indians minor league system, working his way up from Class A Short-Season to Double-A before being traded to the Oakland Athletics in May 2010.

Just over a year later, Wagner received his first call up to the big leagues on August 30, 2011. In ironic fashion too, making his major league debut with the A's against the team that drafted him.

"Day No. 1 at Cleveland," laughed Wagner. "First guy I faced was my Double-A catcher,

Carlos Santana.

"For all of those road trips we'd make in that league (Double-A), we'd come and go by the highway that goes right by, 200 feet from the stadium, and we'd all just look and go, 'That's where we wanna be,'" said Wagner.

Despite striking out his former teammate and notching two scoreless innings in his first two appearances, Wagner would only go on to pitch a total of five innings with Oakland. He would not make the big league team the following spring, struggled in Triple-A and was subsequently taken off of the A's 40-man roster.

Wagner was claimed off of waivers in May 2012 by the San Diego Padres and would spend the season with their Triple-A affiliate in Tucson, Ariz. Wagner was unsure if he'd ever make his way back to an MLB pitching mound.

"At that moment, I kind of viewed that as a fresh start, but by the end of the 2012 season, the doubt had certainly started creeping in at that point because my 2012 season was pretty dismal," said Wagner.

NDSU CAREER STATS

YEARS - 2003-05

APPEARANCES - 64

EARNED RUN AVERAGE - 4.70

WIN-LOSS RECORD - 11-4

GAMES STARTED - 6

SAVES - 18

INNINGS PITCHED - 105.1

STRIKEOUTS - 120

Fifth Bison drafted by the Major Leagues (21st Round, Cleveland)

2014 First-team All-NCC and all-Central Region

Career saves leader at NDSU (18)

Single-season leader in strikeouts/9 innings (13.73, 2004)

Single-season saves leader (12, 2004)

Single-season appearances leaders (28, 2004)

...

MLB CAREER STATS

Played for five organizations

(Cleveland Indians, Oakland A's, San Diego Padres, Toronto Blue Jays, Tampa Bay Rays)

Made Major League debut

August 30, 2011 with Oakland against Cleveland

Made 52 career appearances, pitched 53 innings

Underwent Tommy John surgery in 2014

Signed current contract with Tampa Bay (September 12, 2014)

Following the 2012 season, Wagner became a free-agent and for the first time in his career, was able to sign with any team that made him an offer. Opportunity and a slight edge in compensation led him to sign with the Toronto Blue Jays on November 15, 2012.

Wagner began the 2013 season with Toronto's Triple-A affiliate Buffalo Bisons in another turn of irony.

"It felt ironic on a few levels," laughed Wagner. "I remember at the time I signed with the Indians, they (short season affiliate) were in Buffalo and

Giddings & Associates Recommended NFL Draft Picks

1. Tennessee Titans

- Carson Wentz -

2. Cleveland Browns

- Carson Wentz -

3. San Diego Chargers

- Carson Wentz -

4. Dallas Cowboys

- Carson Wentz -

5. Jacksonville Jaguars

- Carson Wentz -

6. Baltimore Ravens

- Carson Wentz -

7. San Francisco 49ers

- Carson Wentz -

8. Miami Dolphins

- Carson Wentz -

9. Tampa Bay Buccaneers

- Carson Wentz -

10. New York Giants

- Carson Wentz -



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Let us know if your picks were made at
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they were the Bisons. I remember my dad making some kind of corny joke about, 'hopefully you can wear green and play for the Bisons again soon.'"

Wagner was called up to the majors on May 29, 2013, and would quickly notch his first big league win while pitching in relief on June 7 against the Texas Rangers. He had a new sense of confidence in his role and felt he may be sticking around in the majors a little while longer this time.

"I felt that I belonged in the big leagues," said Wagner. "I didn't feel like, 'Okay, well, I'm just going to roll out here and hopefully things go well.' I definitely had a sense that some of the changes I had made were working for me and I felt like, I can be successful, I belong here."

Wagner stayed up with the Blue Jays through most of July that season before being optioned back to Triple-A to make room for a healthy Melky Cabrera. He finished the 2013 season with a 3.79 ERA and 33 strikeouts in 38 innings pitched.

Wagner would be recalled and optioned back to the minors several more times over the next year before receiving some unfortunate news during the 2014 season: he needed Tommy John surgery on his throwing arm.

After initially visiting with Dr. James Andrews, Wagner knew he had a torn ligament, but attempted to rehab his arm since the pain he was feeling was primarily in his flexor muscles and tendons.

"I said, 'Hey let's just try to rehab it. There's nothing wrong with trying that and see if works,'" said Wagner. "I went out and threw three pitches in a rehab game and it was clear that this wasn't going to work for me. By the time I had flown back to see him (Dr. Andrews) a second time, it definitely wasn't a great feeling."

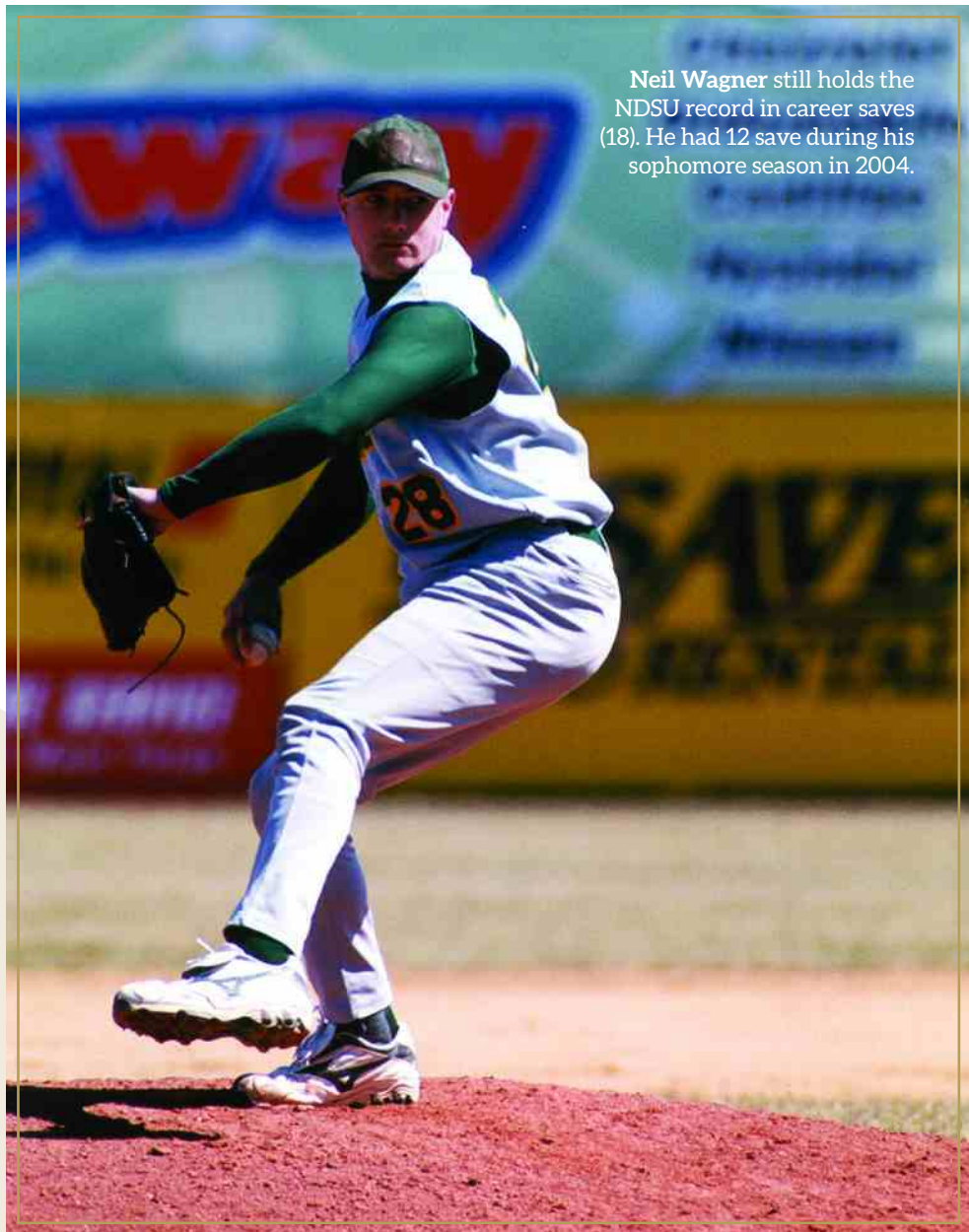
Wagner would undergo Tommy John surgery August 19, 2014, and was subsequently released by the Blue Jays roughly two weeks later. Toronto would then offer to resign Wagner to

a minor league contract, but he was not thrilled with the idea of returning.

"I largely considered that I would quit baseball before I signed that contract," said Wagner. "I really didn't want to have to do that, but my agent talked me off the ledge pretty quickly."

Tampa Bay would also offer Wagner a contract once he was released, an organization that he became familiar with back when he was a free-agent. It did not take long for Wagner to agree to a two-year contract with the Rays, which was virtually a rehab deal with an invite to 2016 Spring Training. Tampa Bay's reputation for getting players healthy was a key factor in Wagner's decision to sign.

Neil Wagner still holds the NDSU record in career saves (18). He had 12 save during his sophomore season in 2004.



Wagner is currently going through rehab at the Rays facility in Port Charlotte, Fla., as Spring Training began February 19 for pitchers and catchers.

"I'm about 20 months since I've actually pitched in a game," said Wagner. "So I think it (my progress) would be a little behind so they manage my innings and I don't get sort of burned out by the All-Star break."

Wagner said he's not looking any further than to May right now in terms of his baseball career, but he hopes that he will have another opportunity to contribute in the majors. He's not ready for the ride to end just yet.

* * *

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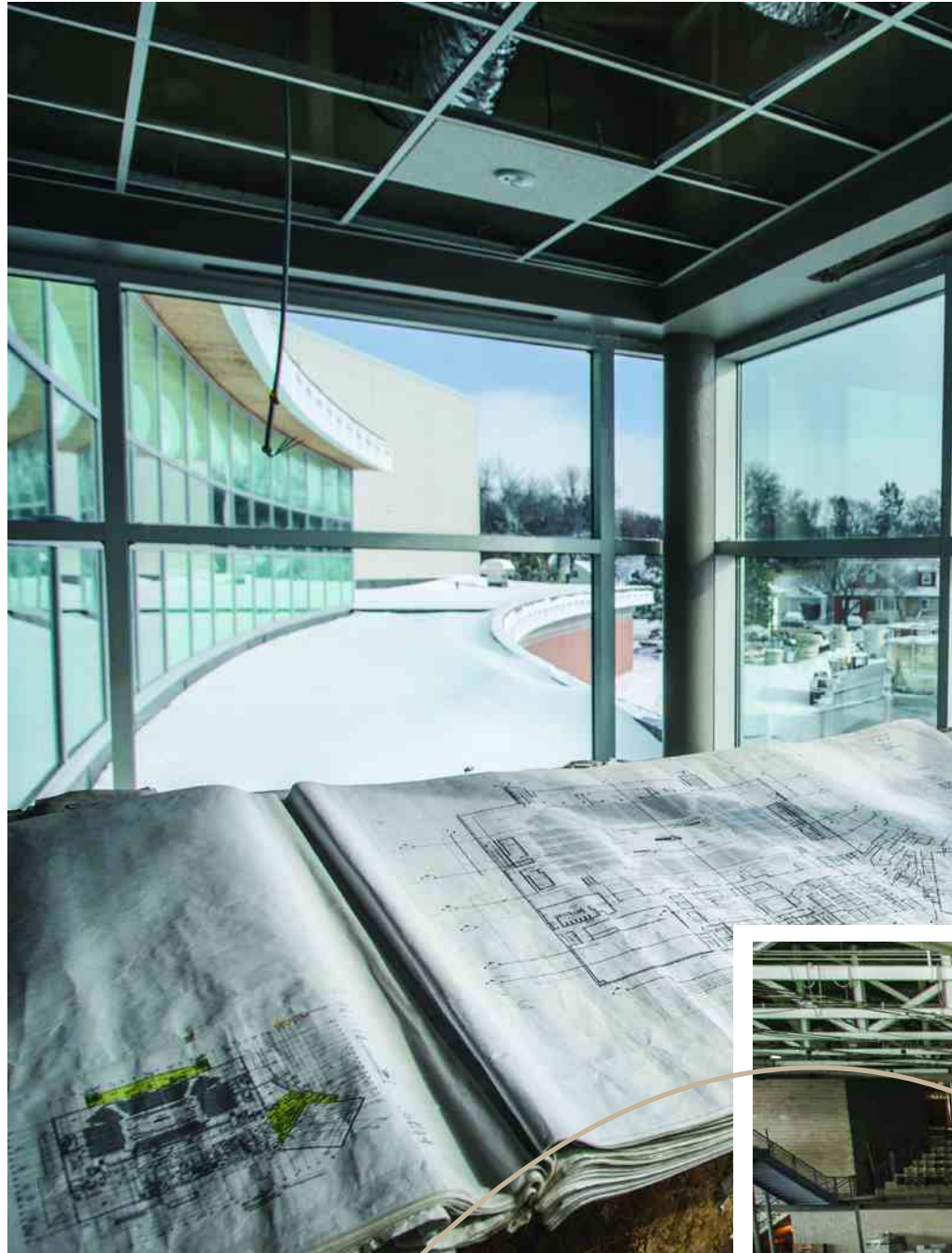
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By Austin Kettelhut
Photos by Paul Flessland

BEFORE AND AFTER

In one month, the Sanford Health Athletic Complex remodeling project will turn 2 years old. The concrete for the new basketball court has been poured and the arena has been enclosed on each end, but there's still much more work to do in the interior of the SHAC. Let's catch you up to speed on all the happenings at the site.



SCHEELS CENTER

The concrete floor is complete and primarily has become a storage space for construction equipment as the crew works on the outer portions of the concourse. The north entrance has yet to be enclosed and filled with concrete floors to allow for large equipment access. The next steps will be finishing the bathrooms and painting. The

permanent hardwood floors and retractable bleachers will be installed closer to the project's completion.

• *Maybe one of the only recognizable structures from the original Bison Sports Arena are the permanent west upper-level bleachers.*

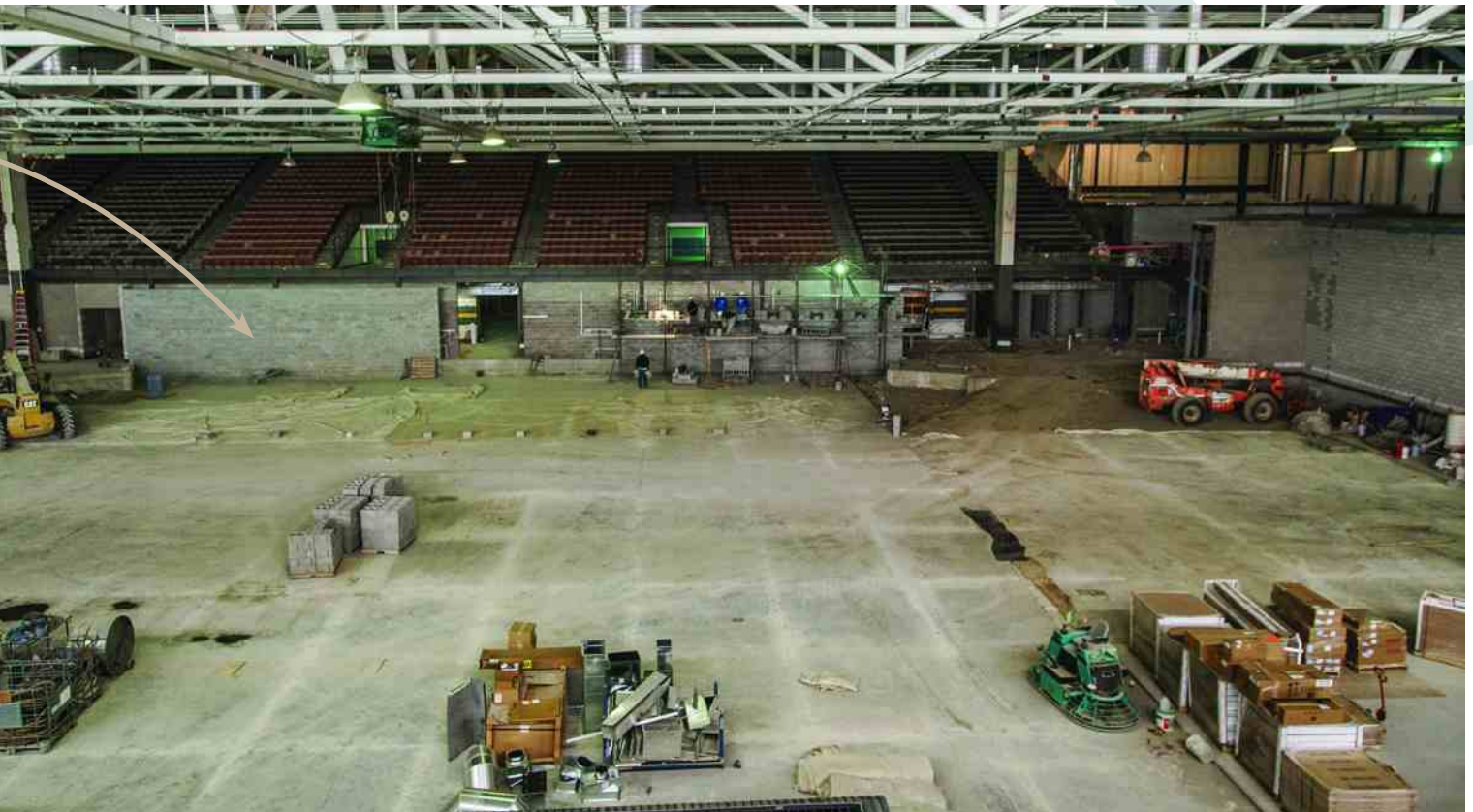




SECOND FLOOR

The drywall work is complete throughout most of the second floor athletic administration offices. The next steps will be installing ceiling fixtures, flooring and finishing up with some painting before the crew can vacate the area. Construction on the second floor is being completed starting from the south end of the building and working their way north.

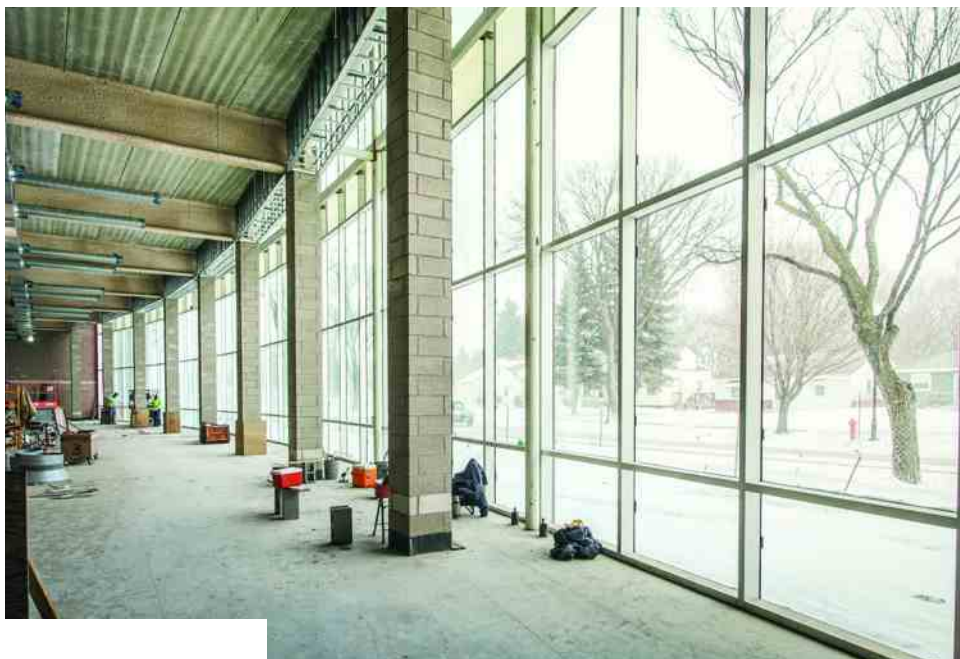
- The athletic director's office overlooks the south parking lot and will be equipped with a personal bathroom.
- Offices for NDSU basketball coaches overlook the practice court. There's also a crow's nest that will allow the coaches to film practices for a fantastic vantage point.



EAST ADDITION

The glass wall on the east expansion has been completed and gives those passing by their first glimpse inside the complex. This area will be finished out with concessions, bathrooms and accent lighting that will be visible from University Drive. Two large staircases will be inserted on the north and south ends of the expansion to help ease congestion.

• On the second-floor concourse, there are chalk outlines on the concrete for where the VIP lounge will be constructed on the east side of the arena.



WEST ADDITION

The weight room and agility room in the west addition are nearly complete and are primarily waiting on flooring. Durable rubber flooring will be installed in the weight room and turf will be installed in the agility room. A nutrition bar/fueling station, as well as an open commons-like area, are being constructed on the east side of the agility room and will provide student-athletes with convenient and nutritious post-workout options.



THERAPY POOLS

The pools have been installed in the therapy area, but are left covered and empty while construction continues. Sheetrocking still needs to be completed on the north side of the room, as well as installing the tile on the walls and floor. There will be a cold tub, hot tub, and a mini pool equipped with a treadmill on its base for recovery.



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MATT'S

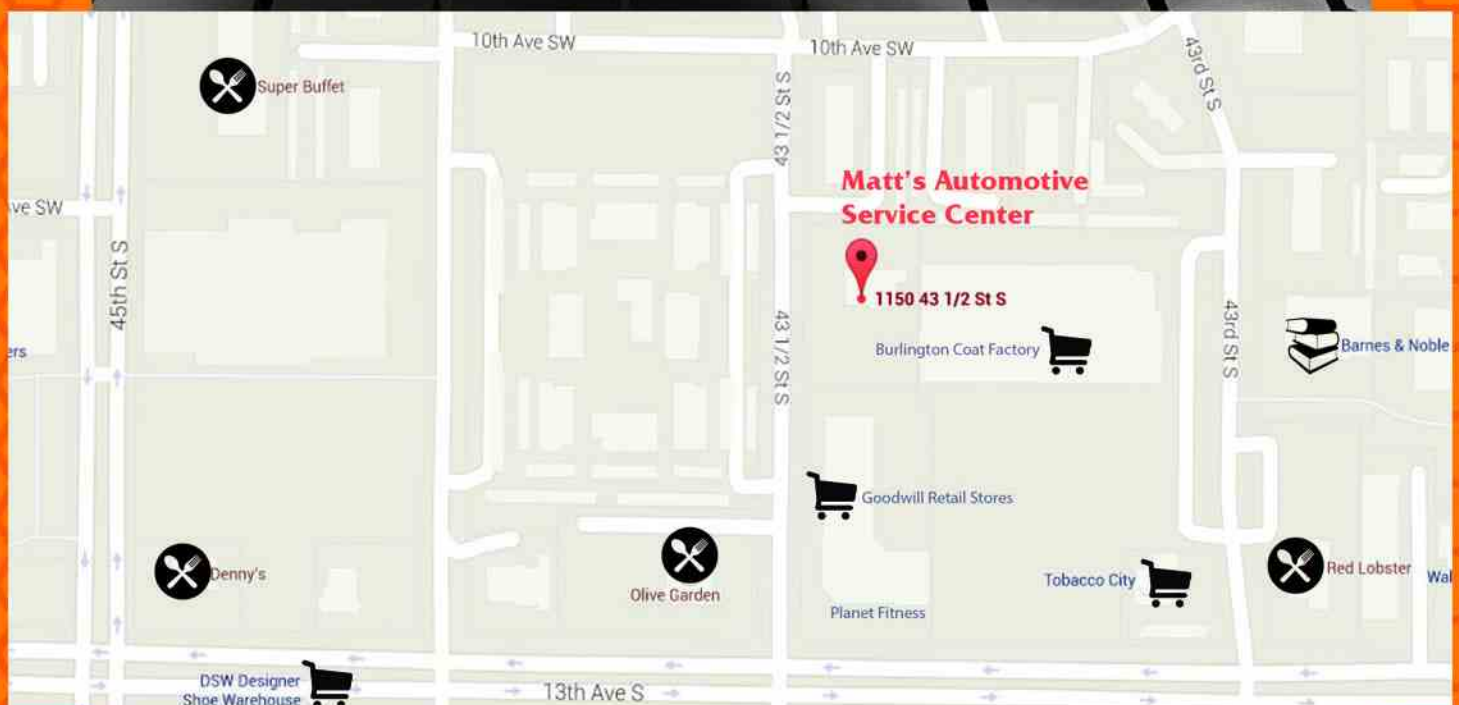


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BUNLESS BURGER

2 green lettuce leaves filled with a hamburger patty & tomato slices, served with mayo on the side

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GRILLED CHEESE

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March 27, 2016
10AM – 2PM



MENU

Breakfast

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Salads

Plaza Salad with House Dressing, Caprese Pasta Salad, Fresh Fruit Display, Pesto and Parmesan Potato Salad, Snicker Apple Salad

Carving Station

Memphis Dry-Rubbed Flank Steak with Georgia, Carolina, and Texas-Style Barbecue Sauces, Fresh Artisan Rolls

Lunch

Miso Rubbed Cod with Napa Slaw, Smoked Ham, Yukon Mashed Potatoes, Chicken Fried Chicken with White Gravy and Biscuits, Sweet Corn with Parsley-Thyme Butter

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SPORTING
CALENDAR

MARCH/APRIL



2016

MARCH

- 4 SOFTBALL**
vs. DePaul University
(Tuscaloosa, Ala.) **11 a.m.**
- 4 BASEBALL**
vs. Maine (Port Charlotte,
Fla.) **2 p.m.**
- 4 SOFTBALL**
at University of Alabama
(Tuscaloosa, Ala.) **6 p.m.**
- 5 BASEBALL**
vs. St. Bonaventure (Port
Charlotte, Fla.) **11 a.m.**
- 5 BASEBALL**
vs. Boston College (Port
Charlotte, Fla.) **3 p.m.**
- 5 SOFTBALL**
at University of Alabama
(Tuscaloosa, Ala.) **4 p.m.**
- 5 SOFTBALL**
vs. University of Louisiana
at Monroe (Tuscaloosa,
Ala.) **6 p.m.**
- 5-8 WOMEN'S
BASKETBALL**
vs. Summit League
Women's Basketball

- 5-8 MEN'S BASKETBALL**
vs. Summit League
Tournament (Sioux Falls,
S.D.) **TBA**
- 5-6 WRESTLING**
vs. Big 12 Championships
(Kansas City, Mo.) **All Day**
- 6 BASEBALL**
vs. St. Bonaventure (Port
Charlotte, Fla.) **9 a.m.**
- 6 SOFTBALL**
vs. DePaul University
(Tuscaloosa, Ala.) **11 a.m.**
- 9 SOFTBALL**
vs. Baylor University
(Honolulu, Hawaii)
7:30 p.m.
- 10 SOFTBALL**
vs. University of
California (Honolulu,
Hawaii) **7:30 p.m.**
- 10-11 WOMEN'S GOLF**
SUU Pizza Hut Lady
Thunderbird Invitational
(St. George, Utah)
(Sunbrook Golf Course)
- 11 BASEBALL**
vs. Central Michigan (Port
Charlotte, Fla.) **2 p.m.**

FTBALL
Baylor University
Honolulu, Hawaii)
9 p.m.

FTBALL
University of Hawaii
Honolulu, Hawaii)
3 p.m.

**WOMEN'S TRACK
AND FIELD**
AA Indoor
Championships
(Birmingham, Ala.)

**MEN'S TRACK AND
FIELD**
AA Indoor
Championships
(Birmingham, Ala.)

BASEBALL
Western Michigan
(Port Charlotte, Fla.)
11 p.m.

SOFTBALL
University of
California (Honolulu,
Hawaii) **2 p.m.**

- 12 SOFTBALL**
at University of Hawaii
(Honolulu, Hawaii) **6 p.m.**
- 13 BASEBALL**
vs. Michigan State (Port
Charlotte, Fla.) **11 a.m.**
- 14-15 WOMEN'S GOLF**
ORU/SFA Spring Break
Invitational (Dallas, Texas)
(Trophy Club Country
Club)
- 15 BASEBALL**
vs. Army (Clearwater,
Fla.) **2 p.m.**
- 15-17 MEN'S GOLF**
ORU/SFA Spring Break
Invitational (Dallas, Texas)
(TPC Four Seasons)
- 17-19 WRESTLING**
vs. NCAA Championships
(New York City) **All Day**
- 18 SOFTBALL**
vs. Binghamton
University (College Park,
Md.) **1:15 p.m.**
- 18 BASEBALL**
at Western Illinois
(Macomb, Ill.) **3 p.m.**
- 18 SOFTBALL**
at University of Maryland
(College Park, Md.)
5:45 p.m.
- 18-19 MEN'S TRACK AND
FIELD**
Baldy Castillo Invitational
(Tempe, Ariz.) **TBA**

- 18-19 WOMEN'S TRACK
AND FIELD**
Baldy Castillo Invitational
(Tempe, Ariz.) **TBA**
- 19 SOFTBALL**
vs. University of
Massachusetts (College
Park, Md.) **10:15 a.m.**
- 19 SOFTBALL**
vs. Boston University
(College Park, Md.)
12:30 p.m.
- 19 BASEBALL**
at Western Illinois
(Macomb, Ill.) **1 p.m.**
- 20 SOFTBALL**
vs. Binghamton
University (College Park,
Md.) **12:30 p.m.**
- 20 BASEBALL**
at Western Illinois
(Macomb, Ill.) **1 p.m.**

- 24-26 WOMEN'S TRACK
AND FIELD**
UC Riverside Spring
Track Classic (Riverside,
Calif.) **TBA**
- 24-26 MEN'S TRACK AND
FIELD**
UC Riverside Spring
Track Classic (Riverside,
Calif.) **TBA**
- 25 BASEBALL**
at Omaha (Omaha, Neb.)
1 p.m.
- 26 SOFTBALL**
at Iowa State University
(Ames, Iowa) **12 p.m.**
- 26 BASEBALL**
at Omaha (Omaha, Neb.)
1 p.m.
- 26 SOFTBALL**
at Iowa State University
(Ames, Iowa) **2 p.m.**
- 27 BASEBALL**
at Omaha (Omaha, Neb.)
1 p.m.
- 28-29 MEN'S GOLF**
UC Irvine Anteater
Invitational (Laguna
Niguel, Calif.) (El Niguel
Country Club)
- 30 SOFTBALL**
vs. University of North
Dakota (Fargo) **4 p.m.**

APRIL

- 1 BASEBALL**
at Oral Roberts (Tulsa,
Okla.) **6:30 p.m.**
- 1-2 MEN'S TRACK AND
FIELD**
Stanford Invitational
(Stanford, Calif.) **TBA**
- 1-2 MEN'S TRACK AND
FIELD**
San Francisco State
Distance Carnival (San
Francisco, Calif.) **TBA**
- 1-2 WOMEN'S TRACK AND
FIELD**
Stanford Invitational
(Stanford, Calif.) **TBA**
- 1-2 WOMEN'S TRACK AND
FIELD**
San Francisco State
Distance Carnival (San
Francisco, Calif.) **TBA**



Junior catcher **Alyssa Reina** enters 2016 coming off a career-high in home runs (14) and batting average (.347) during her sophomore season.



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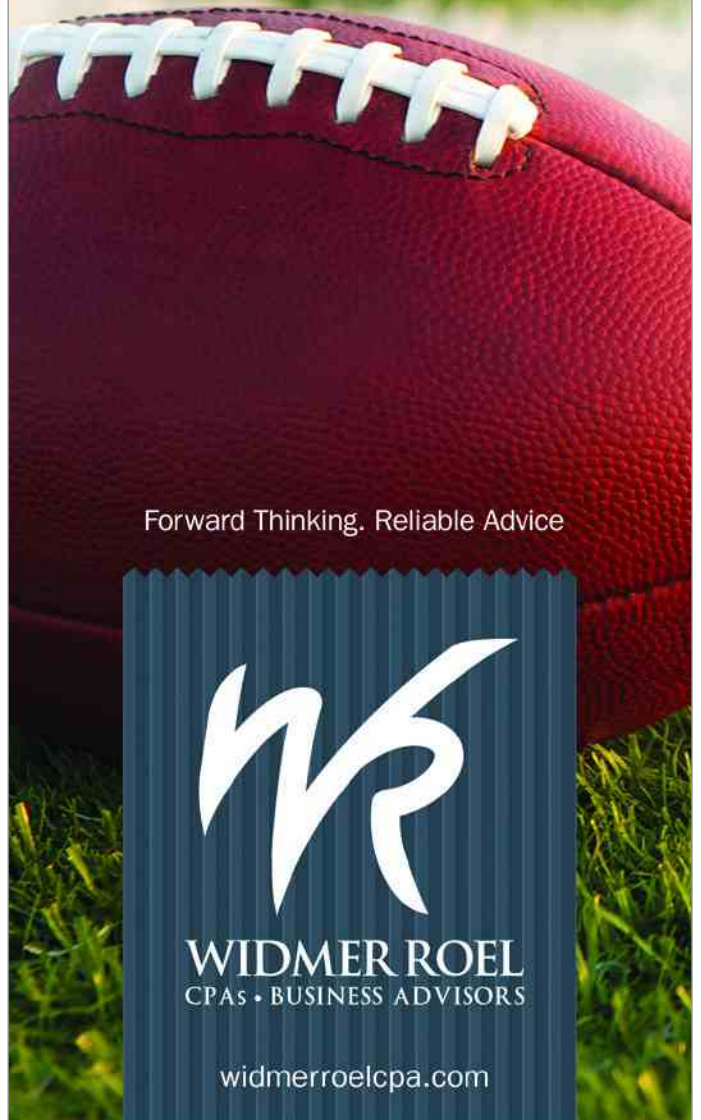
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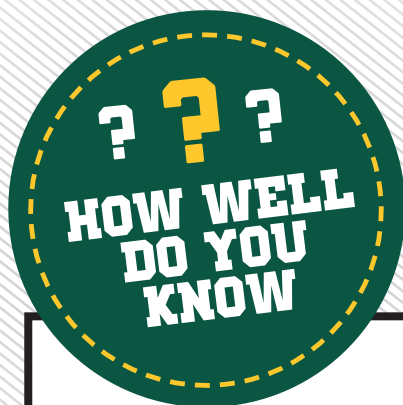


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Brandt Berghuis?

The men's track and field throwers are a close group of guys. So close, we decided to put their relationships to the test. We asked Conrad Schwarzkopf and Alex Renner how well they know senior Brandt Berghuis.



THE QUESTIONS

BRANDT'S ANSWERS

1. What's your favorite dish at the dining center?	Everything. Or pizza.
2. If you had to compete in a running event, what would it be?	60-meter dash
3. Are you more of a cat person or a dog person?	Dog
4. Besides track and field events, what else are you good at throwing?	Conrad or spears
5. Who squats the most weight out of you, Alex and Conrad?	Alex
6. What's your favorite NDSU sporting event to attend, besides track?	Football
7. What's the last movie you saw at the theater?	Star Wars
8. What's your best throwing event?	Shot put



CONRAD SCHWARZKOPF

ALEX RENNER

He likes anything at the dining center that makes him full. +1	Any meal at the dining center is his favorite meal +1
Probably the 60m dash +1	Steeplechase
Dog person, for sure +1	Dog +1
A football	Chairs
Alex +1	Alex +1
The wrestling matches	Strictly throwing
Probably the new Star Wars +1	Star Wars +1
Shot put +1	Hammer

WINNER 6-8

LOSER 4-8



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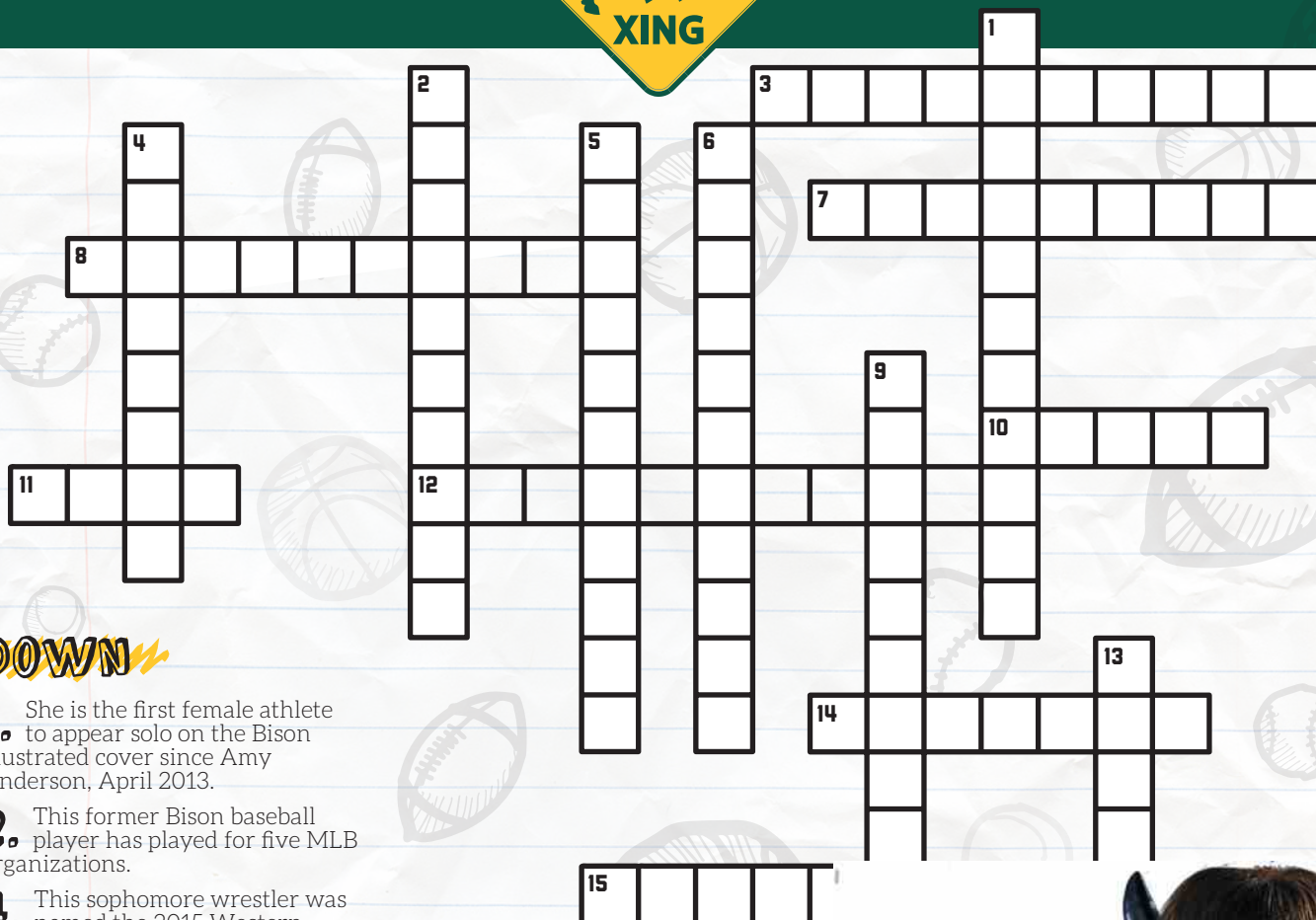


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BISON CROSSING



DOWN

1. She is the first female athlete to appear solo on the Bison Illustrated cover since Amy Anderson, April 2013.

2. This former Bison baseball player has played for five MLB organizations.

4. This sophomore wrestler was named the 2015 Western Wrestling Conference Freshman of the Year last season.

5. The softball team is scheduled to have their home-opener against the University of _____.

6. He was the voice of Bison football and basketball for 20 years.

9. The Summit League basketball tournament is held in this city in South Dakota.

13. The Bison football team is scheduled to play this Big Ten opponent this September.

ANSWERS

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. Erin Teschuk | 8. Paul Miller |
| 2. Neil Wagner | 7. Thunstedt |
| 3. Alex Renner | 6. Scott Miller |
| 4. Clay Ream | 5. North Dakota |
| 9. Sioux Falls | 10. China |
| 11. SHAC | 12. Natalie Roth |
| 13. Iowa | 14. Jackson |
| 15. Petersen | |

ACROSS

3. The record holder for the best shot in NDSU history is _____.

7. Bison women's basketball point guard Taylor _____ once scored 50 points in a game for New London-Spicer High School.

8. This men's basketball player scored 13 points against Gonzaga in the NCAA Tournament as a freshman.

10. The country track and field star Erin Teschuk competed in this _____.

11. The popular acronym used when naming the Sanford Health _____ Complex.

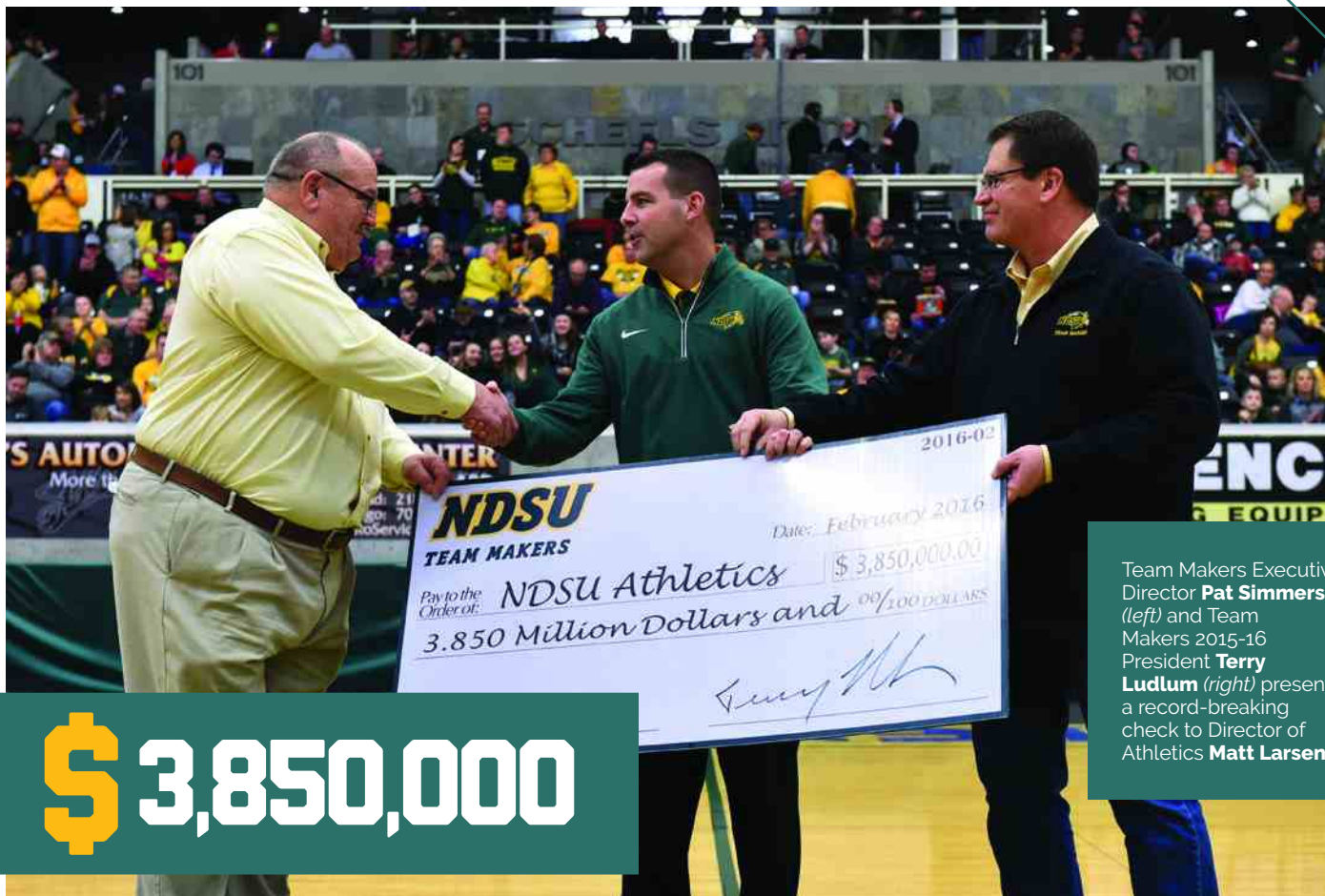
12. This women's golfer had the lowest average as a freshman from a Big Ten school.

14. Junior multi-event athlete Rose _____ once knelt herself in the face at her personal record in the indoor high jump.

15. Ben _____ led the Bison in 1997 with a .355 batting average.



SEE ANSWERS IN LEFT CORNER!



Team Makers Executive Director **Pat Simmers** (left) and Team Makers 2015-16 President **Terry Ludlum** (right) present a record-breaking check to Director of Athletics **Matt Larsen**.

\$3,850,000

By Joe Kerlin
Photo by Richard Svaleson

It was another year of progress for the NDSU fundraising group, Team Makers. The men and women that donate to NDSU Athletics every year set a new donation record after presenting Director of Athletics Matt Larsen for a check worth \$3.85 million dollars during halftime of a men's basketball game at SCHEELS Arena.

2015 introduced 352 new members to the Team Makers Club and it was the biggest membership spike in the past five years. Along with its new members, 116 returning Team Makers increased their annual giving.

Starting at just \$100 per year, Team Makers from across the country have pitched in to help student-athletes in all sports at NDSU live their college athletic dreams to the fullest.

"The volunteers and donors behind Team Makers continue to help take NDSU to new heights," Larsen said in an official NDSU Athletics release. "Our mission to provide the best academic and athletic experiences for our student-athletes would not be achieved without their loyal support. We look forward to continued growth as we increase scholarships for years to come."

Registration to become a Team Maker is year-round, and you can sign up at NDSUAthleticFund.com.

Benefits from becoming an NDSU Team Maker includes priority points for tickets – including football – tax deductions and social opportunities to meet with Bison coaches and staff members during weekly luncheons.

TEAM MAKERS MEMBERSHIPS

YEAR	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
NEW TEAM MAKERS	180	307	312	297	352
MEMBERSHIP UPGRADES	150	259	195	85	116
REVENUE FROM CONTRIBUTORS	2.068 MILLION	2.633 MILLION	3.099 MILLION	3.660 MILLION	3.850 MILLION

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SWANY SAYS



BY JOSHUA A. SWANSON

**Swanson is a native of Maddock, N.D., a proud NDSU alum and a life-long Bison fan.*

ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO PRINT: NORTH DAKOTA STATE RIDING CREST OF MOMENTUM UNLIKE ANY OTHER IN COLLEGE ATHLETICS



FOLLOW @SWANY8

S

even years ago, it captured national media attention. It wasn't just a story relegated to the sports pages. This was front-page news complete with

the banner headlines. Local media descended onsite, doing live spots before and after games, a rarity for television stations that don't hold the broadcast rights. It was the lead story on the evening news. It was the biggest thing, sports-wise, to ever happen in North Dakota. Networks from ESPN to CBS ran features. Print outlets from the New York Times to USA Today had stories on this upstart team from Fargo.

Seven years ago? Wait, didn't North Dakota State's run of five straight national football championships begin, well, five years ago in 2011? It sure did. But this sensation didn't wear shoulder pads and helmets. No, they laced up sneakers and brought big-time college basketball to the Dakotas. This might help you remember. A guy named Ben Woodside comes down the court at the old Sioux Falls Arena during the Summit League championship game against Oakland. Game tied. Only seconds left. A spot in the NCAA Tournament at stake. Winner dances in March Madness, loser goes home.

Woodside darts from the top of the key going hard left, gets a rock-solid screen from Lucas Moormann, suddenly pulls up and rips a 17-foot

jumper that was good from the moment it left his hands, giving the Bison a 66-64 victory and first ever appearance in the biggest sporting event in the world. NDSU fans storm the court, pandemonium ensues and the Bison become a nationwide story. "He pulled up on the shot instead of taking it to the rim and I remember when he got it off, I knew it was in as soon as it left his hands," said then-Bison coach Saul Phillips in an interview commemorating the tournament's final year in the "Old Barn" in 2014.

That was supposed to be a team for the ages. And it was, but not in the way most expected. The squad boasted three of the top scorers in program history in Woodside, Brett Winkelman and Mike Nelson. Pioneers for sure, but not the once-in-a-generation team the experts predicted. With all of NDSU's success, including three NCAA Tournament appearances, it's hard to remember that in 2009, the thought of the Bison regularly appearing in March Madness seemed, to many, as unthinkable as winning an FCS championship, let alone five straight.

Lest we forget, take this snippet from the New York Times that appeared in the paper's January 23, 2006, edition after the Bison upset the No. 15 Wisconsin Badgers. Looking back, it was the first salvo in a run that has witnessed the Bison climb the ranks to a nationally recognized program. The article summarizes the now epochal Genesis story: "North Dakota State officials were criticized when they made the jump to Division I two years ago."

The Bison still do not have a conference and are not eligible for the NCAA basketball tournament until 2009. The move caused hard feelings throughout the state, because it broke up a long rivalry with Division II University of North Dakota."

No conference. No postseason eligibility for three more years. No problem. If making the NCAA Tournament and playing Kansas in the Metrodome was the Apollo moment, akin to putting our guys on the moon, once a seemingly impossible concept, the win against the Badgers was the culmination of the Gemini missions. We could do this. It set the stage for a university that, at the time, few outside of Fargo had heard of, a school that certainly wasn't supposed to make regular appearances in March Madness or appear on ESPN's College GameDay. The same New York Times article quoted then-NDSU athletic director Gene Taylor. *"It was a challenging move, and not everyone was on board with it," Taylor said. 'But you look at all the interest throughout the country in this win over Wisconsin. You cannot put a price on that exposure for the athletic program and the university.'"*



Ben Woodside drives to the hoop against Oakland during the 2009 Summit League championship.

You know the rest of the story. What was billed as a once-in-a-generation run in 2009 has happened two more times since, culminating with the victory over Oklahoma in 2014 that gave the Bison the glass slipper of America's Cinderella. From Woodside, Phillips and Taylor to Taylor Braun, Lawrence Alexander, Dave Richman and Matt Larsen, the Bison have built a perennial winner with a championship culture. Again, the New York Times took notice, this time with a banner headline on March 21, 2014 after the upset against the Sooners. "North Dakota State Thinks Big, Has Fun, Earns Attention." That headline and these words leap off the page. "And no collegiate athletic department is riding a bigger crest of momentum," proclaimed America's newspaper of record, which has told our nation's story since 1851.

Think about that. The most recognized newspaper in the world proclaimed that no other collegiate athletic department is riding a bigger crest of momentum. Thinks big. Has Fun. Earns attention. Man, how does your heart not swell with pride – Bison Pride – when you read that? As Ma Swany says, "but go one better." Since those words were written, NDSU has made a repeat trip to the NCAA Tournament giving Gonzaga a run for their money, won two more FCS

national championships, made NCAA Tournament appearances in softball and baseball, had Olympians in track and field, dozens of all-Americans, been ranked in the Top 25 in wrestling and softball, won a regular season conference title in soccer, has a quarterback about to be drafted as one of the top picks in the NFL Draft, SportsCenter visited campus, and GameDay is talking about making a third appearance. Don't forget the icing on the cake – we'll open a brand spanking new sports complex and basketball arena next fall that will be one of the crowning jewels in mid-major hoops.

If we were riding the biggest crest of momentum in all of college athletics in March 2014, what would the New York Times have to say about where we're at in March 2016? I think about where we've been and the road we've traveled. What makes me more excited, though, is thinking about the road we're on and our future, where we're going. The slogan of the New York Times is "All the News That's Fit to Print." You could say the same thing about North Dakota State – after all, we've got quite the story to tell and we're just getting started. That's some news that's fit to print. Everybody up for the tipoff, the march is on!

* * *

POP QUIZ

WITH NDSU ATHLETES



SOFTBALL

Maritza Lopez-Portillo

Senior **Maritza Lopez-Portillo** is one of the premier defensive outfielders in the Summit League. She's tallied nine career assists from the outfield and has a career fielding percentage of 97 percent. Lopez-Portillo was named to the 2015 first-team All-Summit League.

WHO HAS BEEN THE MOST INFLUENTIAL IN YOUR GROWTH AS A COLLEGE ATHLETE?

My teammates and coaches have been a huge part of my growth as a player throughout my years at NDSU.

IF YOU COULD ONLY EAT ONE THING FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Definitely, it would have to be steak and shrimp with mashed potatoes and broccoli.

WHAT IS YOUR SPIRIT ANIMAL?

Giraffe.



TRACK & FIELD

Colin Paarmann

Colin Paarmann is a senior multi-event athlete on the track and field team. He specializes in long and triple jump and was All-Summit League 60-meter hurdler during the 2015 indoor season. His career-best in triple jump is 49 feet and 11 3/4 inches.

Our jumps coach, Trevor Barry.

Breakfast burritos.

A tortoise.



TRACK & FIELD

Lexy Boschee

Lexy Boschee is the reigning Summit League pentathlon champion. She's continued her ascension into greatness by marking four personal records this indoor season. She qualified for the NCAA West Preliminary Rounds for the first time last outdoor season.

Coach Keller. He understands what it's like to be a college athlete and is able to give positive encouragement for the things done right, and corrects us if something is wrong. It's helpful to have someone to coach you who's been through the same thing you're going through.

Huckleberry Milkshakes.

Gazelle.



WRESTLING

Josh Rodriguez

Junior **Josh Rodriguez** wrestles for the Bison in the 125-pound weight division. He qualified for the NCAA Championships last season as a junior and finished the season with a 20-8 record. This year, he's been ranked in the top 20 in his weight class for the majority of the season.

My dad

Big Mac

Canine



BASKETBALL

BROOKE YAGGIE

Sophomore **Brooke Yaggie** has started every game for the women's basketball team this season. She's averaging seven points while playing 33 minutes a game. Her brother Alex Yaggie was on the 2011 NDSU football championship winning team.

My brother, Alex.

Chocolate.

A cat.

WHAT GREEN ARTICLE OF CLOTHING DO YOU PLAN ON WEARING FOR ST. PATRICK'S DAY?

Green fuzzy socks.

My NDSU green socks, shirt, sweatshirt, and hat. St. Patrick's day is easy when you're a Bison!

Most likely a Bison t-shirt.

I'll probably wear some type of NDSU wrestling apparel.

Probably one of my green NDSU sweatshirts or sweatpants, like every other day!

WHAT TV SHOW WAS YOUR LAST BINGE-WATCH?

"Quantico." Every episode keeps my mind wondering what is next and wanting more!

Parks and Recreation.

The BBC documentary series: Human Planet (I watched every episode in two days).

The Bachelor (with my girlfriend)

The Bachelor.

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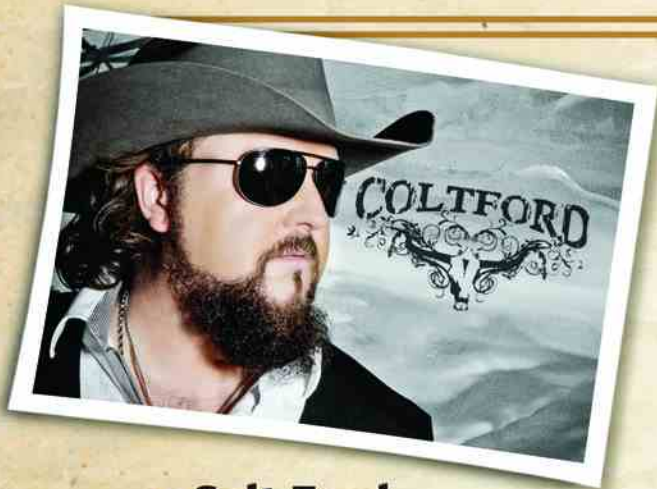
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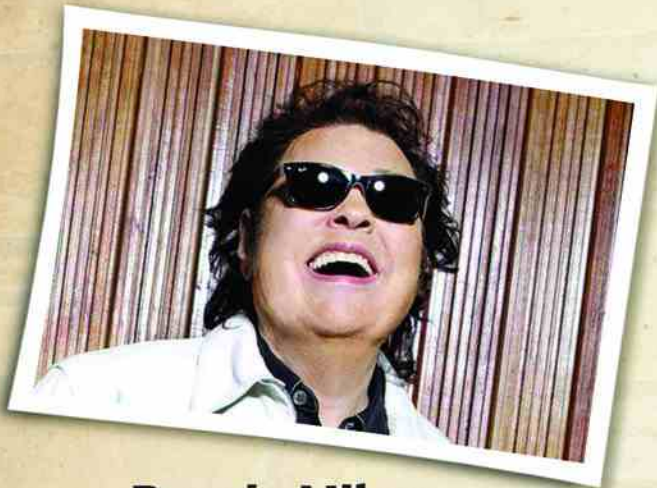
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